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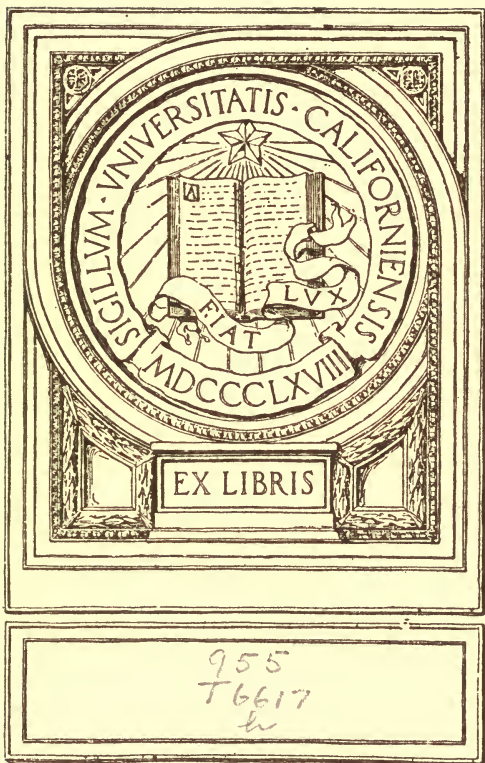
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# HER MAJESTY

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By ELIZABETH KNIGHT TOMPKINS.

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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

# HER MAJESTY

A ROMANCE OF TO-DAY

BY

ELIZABETH KNIGHT TOMPKINS

AUTHOR OF "AN UNLESSONED  
GIRL," ETC.



G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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# HER MAJESTY

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## CHAPTER I.

“KINGS MUST PLAY A WEARY PART.”

QUEEN HONORIA took off her ermine robes and hung them up in the wardrobe. Her golden crown she placed neatly on the shelf above. At least, that was what one would have expected a Queen Honoria to do on retiring to her boudoir after a royal audience in the throne room. As a matter of fact, she had n't any ermine robes on, only a morning gown of the latest Parisian make ; a quantity of dark, wavy hair took the place of a crown ; and what she did was to fling herself full length on the window-seat in front of the big windows overlooking the park and give a sigh of relief. One would never have thought of her being a Queen : she was too modern, too full of life. She might have been a Gibson girl,—the tall, broad-should-

ered kind with the type of face that one calls "almost too strong to be pretty." And yet she was a real crowned queen, the heir of a long line of sovereigns, not just the queen of a household, or the queen of a heart, or the kind of queen Ruskin writes of in *Sesame and Lilies*. One would never have thought of her having the stiff, ugly name of Honoria, either; Helen would have suited her better, or Eleanor.

"Dear me, how dreadfully wearisome they are!" exclaimed Her Majesty, half aloud; and, indeed, they were wearisome, those long audiences with a Prime Minister who considered statesmanship and chicanery synonymous, and prided himself on keeping his royal mistress ignorant of the true purport of the measures which she sanctioned. To-day he had begun by advising that Her Majesty show herself to her people a little more, that she drive around the streets and public parks and attend the theatres. There was some political discontent abroad; demagogues were getting hold of the people's ears, but the sight of the Queen would doubtless be enough to put an end to that. The Baron made the suggestion as if it were the first time the subject had been brought up be-



tween them. It was part of his policy to ignore past defeats. Now one of Queen Honoria's most objectionable characteristics, in the eyes of her Prime Minister, was an inability, or an unwillingness, to carry out her part of these little pretences; accordingly, she silenced him with a—"Please do not bring that up again, Baron Hausman. I tell you finally that I will not appear in public. I should feel altogether too flat, trailing around the streets with four horses, as if I were the leading lady in a circus, with claquers throwing up their hats and shouting 'God Save the Queen!' in front, while the real people, my people, are scowling silently in the background, or turning their heads so as not to see me. I tried it once, and I will never do it again. I know the people are discontented, and I am not sure but that they have a right to be." Then she had ended by an impulsive little appeal out of the depths of her heart, not that she thought it would do any good, but because she could not help it: "Why need we be so at cross-purposes, my subjects and I? What is good for the one is surely good for the other. Why can we not have an investigation, ask them for a specific list of their grievances,

and remedy those that are in our power? If you knew how unhappy those hungry faces that I see through the park palings make me! It is positively wicked, spending their money, as we do, in banquets, illuminations, and all that sort of thing that give no one an atom of enjoyment! I have protested until I am tired, and shall soon begin to act on my own responsibility. The court expenses must be cut down. It makes me ill to see the lavishness and waste on all sides when people are actually starving not a quarter of a mile away. Besides, I care for my people's affection more than for their money." The Baron gave an almost imperceptible shrug of his shoulders.

"Your Majesty is young and has been here in the city but a short time, while I, I have been Prime Minister twenty years, and have lived here all my life. Your Majesty must not think the townspeople like the ignorant peasants. Consequently, I know them better than Your Majesty can possibly do; I know the effect of splendor on their minds; and I also know that if you give them an inch, they will take a mile. Your Majesty may be sure that I have investigated thoroughly all their complaints. I find

their demands preposterous ; it is all the work of demagogues, who have their own ends in view, and who would not let them be satisfied until they had turned the country into a Republic." The Baron expected this last remark to be an extinguisher to the Queen's desires for political reform. He did not at all object to frightening her a little, she was altogether too independent. He shot a sharp glance out of his sharp little eyes at her face, but did not see the dismay there that he expected to find. He almost sat down in his surprise when Her Majesty went on :

"Well, perhaps that is the only solution of the problem. I wish to study up the whole question myself. I am tired of being put aside like a child that asks unanswerable questions. If you will not help me to do so, I can find others that will. I have been given a great trust, and it is my duty to fulfil it. The welfare of my people ought to be more important than my own. Yes, Baron Hausman, you have failed. You made one great mistake, and that ruined you. Mme. Duvalet was not the governess to choose for a Queen whom you intended to be a puppet in the hands of her ministers."

"Mme. Duvalet!" exclaimed the Baron in surprise. The Queen laughed aloud.

“Have you never guessed where I got those ‘ridiculous’ ideas of mine? Ah, Baron, you are a very clever man, but Mme. Duvalet was cleverer. You never even suspected that her opinions were those of her brother, Prince Palatsky, and not those of her bigoted, aristocratic family?” The Baron gave a slight start. “There is no reason you should not know it now she is dead, poor dear woman. Perhaps it will make you understand me a little better, and also the uselessness of trying to make me swallow your opinions like pills, without investigating their contents. Mme. Duvalet was a Nihilist, whose one mission was the instilling of some less antediluvian ideas into the head of a poor little benighted princess. She was never allowed to undertake anything else, for fear of casting suspicion on her; and you never suspected the intrigues that made you believe her your choice and persuaded the King to give her the position. She made you think she would help you to make me as utterly orthodox and unoriginal as my uncle, and as powerless in your hands. When she came, I already had an overwhelming idea of my own importance, and believed implicitly in the divine right of kings, and of my-

self in particular. It had never occurred to me that I had any duties toward my people. My dear Baron, your hair would stand on end if you knew the books she gave me to read." The Baron's hair almost stood on end at the present moment. He was, for once, taken aback, and had n't a word to say.

"To think I never suspected it," he murmured. Then went on: "Your Majesty has given me a great surprise. Mme. Duvalet a Nihilist!"

"Yes, and a most ardent one. What she believed in was the divine right of the people. Sometime I will tell you a few of her ideas. They will astonish you. I am tired now. Is there anything else you *must* consult me about?" If the Baron had not been so utterly confounded by the news he had just heard, he would not have chosen this moment to bring up the next subject on his list; but his usual diplomacy had left him.

"I wished to speak about Your Majesty's marriage," he began hesitatingly.

"Well," said Her Majesty, "what about it?" The Baron had meant to urge that the festivities and good wishes attendant on a royal mar-

riage would do a great deal to turn the people's attention from their imaginary grievances ; but the Queen had taken this argument out of his mouth, so all that he could do was to utter a few platitudes about the duty of securing the succession and strengthening the Kingdom by a strong political alliance.

"Who is it now?" asked Her Majesty in her most unpromising manner.

"Your Majesty may remember Prince Louis of Darmstadt who was present at Your Majesty's coronation?"

"Yes, I remember him perfectly. Was it to him that you proposed to offer me?"

"If Your Majesty chooses to put it that way."

"Do you know that he has a choice collection of relatives in straight jackets, and is a fit subject for one himself?" demanded Her Majesty.

"Only his sister and his uncle," faltered the Baron, feeling himself somewhat in awe of this strong-minded young woman. The Queen laughed a little bitterly.

"A good way to secure the succession!" she said.

"Such things are not necessarily hereditary. Indeed there is a great divergence of medical opinion on this point," the Baron was beginning, when Honoria interrupted him with a laugh.

"It 's not an atom of use, Baron. You might as well spare your breath ; and please see that the next husband you pick out for me has a forehead and a chin as well as a sound mind. How little you statesmen think of us Royalties that you sacrifice us as you do. To tell the truth, kings and queens are anachronisms, and it is hard to adjust the ideas of this age to their use."

"Your Majesty means to consider some other marriage then?" Baron Hausman asked insinuatingly.

"If you will bring me a man," the Queen answered with a scornful emphasis on the last word. The Baron smiled, and uttered a few inanities about the loneliness of royalty and the need of love and companionship that even queens must feel. These remarks angered Her Majesty, simply because they were so true; and she did not like to have Baron Hausman touch her most sacred sorrow, dropping sounding lines into the depths of her heart, with a

view to making a chart of it for future use. Accordingly, she said contemptuously :

“ And it would make a queen less lonely to have a husband of another’s choosing ! If mere companionship were the antidote to loneliness, we queens ought not to suffer from it, for we certainly enjoy less of our own society than any other class of people.”

“ But Your Majesty will consider the question ? ” the Baron persisted. A quick gleam of intelligence, or fun, came into the Queen’s eyes, and she turned away her head to hide it.

“ Yes, I will consider it, if you will let me go to the convent for a fortnight, and have that time to myself to consider it in ? ”

“ If I will let Your Majesty ! ” Hausman exclaimed in a surprised tone.

“ Oh, I know I am nominally your mistress ; but you remind me of a darkey coachman I was reading about in a story the other day. Whenever the family he lived with wanted the carriage, they had to give old Pomp a small piece of money, or else something was sure to be the matter so they could n’t have it,—either one of the horses was lame or wanted shoeing, or something. Please may I go ? I will promise you to



think a great deal about the subject of getting married. It is one that has some slight interest for me."

"I should think a fortnight's retirement for religious meditation and rest from the duties of State would be a most excellent thing for Your Majesty. When does Your Majesty purpose to go?"

"I don't see why I should n't go this afternoon. There are no special functions on hand, and there is nothing else you wanted to see me about, is there?"

"Only to ask if Your Majesty has considered having some new photographs taken for general circulation. The shopkeepers are constantly complaining that they have only the coronation one."

"I don't believe there is any great demand, and that ought to satisfy them, anyway. It is a very good-looking picture, so what does it matter if one would never know it was I? No, Baron; I don't want to at present. When I have done something for the people will be time enough. I suppose there is no danger of their doing anything rash in the next fortnight?"

“Certainly not. They have got a new leader, a young fellow named Hiller, but I think we can manage him.” The Baron smiled as he said this.

“You mean?” asked Her Majesty.

“Only that I fancy he is amenable to reason,—like the rest of us. They say he can do anything he likes with the workingmen, and he may be induced to help us.” The Queen sighed.

“What a cynic and unbeliever generally you are, Baron! I wonder if, by any possibility, you can be right. I wish it were n’t vulgar for a queen to bet, for I should like to lay a small wager with you about this Hiller. Of course, I don’t know anything about him, except what I read in the only paper you allow me to see; but that I liked. Do you know, I don’t wish to appear conceited, but I am sure I have not a price for anything I should consider it wrong to do?”

“Oh, but one’s opinions as to what is right and what wrong, change under judicious manipulation,” murmured the Baron. The Queen sighed again.

“Well,” she said, “I shall be glad to get away from all these perplexities for a little; and, as

you hinted, my piety will make a good impression. I shall be under the direct influence of the Mother Superior and my worthy Father Confessor, and perhaps that may have some beneficial effect on my character." The Baron crossed himself. The Baron was pious.

"My prayers shall attend Your Majesty, as always," he said, bowing himself out of the room, at a sign from the Queen.

It was of this interview that Queen Honoria thought, as she lay on the window-seat, and looked out, across a little strip of lawn, into the beautiful park, where chestnuts, oaks, and beeches were clothing themselves in their new spring garments, and turf and bracken were springing up underfoot for the deer to graze. She was congratulating herself on giving what one of her subjects might have called a piece of her mind to the Baron. Although she had been coming to it by degrees ever since her accession, it was the first time she had ever entirely cast off restraint and told him freely and frankly what she thought of affairs in general and of himself in particular. It was not prudent, perhaps, but she could not help it. The thought of the Baron's dismay at finding what a Tartar

he had caught was amusing. As she went over the scene to herself, the sad expression left her face, and something that was almost fun took the place of it. She jumped up, gave a little pirouette on the ends of her toes, just as if she had n't been a queen at all, and almost ran across the room into her bedchamber beyond, humming a verse of a squib that had appeared in one of the papers a short time before, and had been a source of great amusement to Her Majesty. It had been respectfully dedicated to Baron H——sm——n :

“ You may think it 's fun  
A kingdom to run,  
With a girl at the head it 's the deuce.  
You may argue a case  
Till you're black in the face,  
But it is n't an atom of use.”

She had quoted from it in her interview with the Baron, and had seen a conscious look come over his face as he recognized it.

An hour or two later a close carriage drew up in front of the gates of the convent, lying on the outskirts of the city, just out of which the Royal Palace was situated. A woman

thickly veiled alighted, rang the bell and was admitted by a nun. The carriage drove away.

"I wish to see the Mother Superior," she said so authoritatively that Sister Agatha did not dare mention that it was not the Mother Superior's hour for receiving visitors, but showed her into a narrow white-washed parlor.

When the Mother Superior entered the room, her visitor threw back her veil,

"Your Majesty!" exclaimed the former, in surprise.

"Yes," said the Queen. "I have come to stay that fortnight I promised you. You remember the conditions, Reverend Mother?" The Mother Superior flushed a little.

"I do not know what to do, Your Majesty. I dare not allow it."

"And you don't dare not allow it," added the Queen, with a smile.

"If Your Majesty would let me consult Father Lalande."

"Where is he?"

"As it happens, he is here in the chapel, confessing some of the sisters. I will go for him immediately."

“Do so,” said Her Majesty. The Mother Superior backed ceremoniously out of the room and returned in about five minutes, followed by a tall, thin, ascetic-looking man—Father Lalande, Confessor to Her Majesty the Queen.

“Our Mother has told you?” asked the Queen, when she had graciously accepted his salutation. Father Lalande gave a little cough before he answered.

“I am afraid it is impossible, Your Majesty. We could not accept the responsibility.” He was about to say something more, but the Queen interrupted him.

“You know the alternative,” she said imperiously. “Either you let me have the garden rooms in the wing, and—*la clef des champs*, without attendance or supervision of any sort, or else—you know what will follow.” The priest and the Mother Superior exchanged a glance of deep meaning. When Her Majesty paused, the latter remarked calmly:

“Shall I show Your Majesty to her rooms? Fortunately they happen to be vacant. When will Your Majesty’s attendants arrive?”

“My old nurse will be here directly and my little dog Sunny, they are all my suite. Sunny

is as good as a policeman's rattle in case any strangers should prowl around my rooms."

As she left the room, the Queen smiled graciously over her shoulder at Father Lalande.

"We are friends in everything else, are we not, Father? You don't bear malice for this? It is a necessary piece of intimidation." The priest's face lit up with an answering smile.

"Ah, Your Majesty," was all he said. Then Queen Honoria stopped in the doorway and added, addressing the Mother Superior without and the priest within :

"I think I do not need to tell you that I am a self-respecting woman as well as a queen. I am not even a romantic one. My only motive is a desire to know my people better. I am kept so far away from them that nothing can get to my ears. Now, Reverend Mother."

"The little-side garden shall be reserved for Your Majesty's use," said the Mother Superior, as they crossed the beautiful old garden to the wing in which the Queen's apartments were situated. "The children play here, but I do not believe their noise will reach Your Majesty."

"I hope it will," said Honoria, heartily. "I long to hear them. You do not care if I talk

to them and make friends with them, do you, Mother? If they will let me," she added, a little sadly.

"It will be something for them to remember all their days and to tell their grandchildren about. I often tell them of the weeks Your Majesty spent with us when you were a child. They are always asking to hear about the parrot that took such a fancy to Your Majesty, that Your Majesty used to drag around on a broom."

"I don't believe you tell them *all* about it," ventured the Queen, with a smile. The Mother Superior smiled too.

"I use a little judicious reticence," she admitted.

"Oh, those judicious reticences! The same old subject for argument! If I could only make you see that they were n't necessary, you and Father Lalande. I have been fond of you both all my life, and we could be such good friends if it were not for these same little reticences. Baron Hausman is another, but I don't mind in his case. I never could have either liked or respected him."

"Your Majesty does not understand," said



the Mother Superior, attempting no further argument. They were walking slowly down the little side garden under a walk of blossoming pear trees. "Will Your Majesty allow me to say something I have on my mind?" she asked, as they came to the foot of this.

"Anything you wish, Mother."

"Would it not be advisable to conciliate the Baron a little more? He is very powerful, and makes a most bitter enemy."

"Would you have me afraid of him?" Queen Honoria demanded, with scorn in her voice. "No! The first thing Mme. Duvalet taught me was that a queen should fear nothing in heaven or earth in doing what she thinks to be right."

"But there is nothing to be ashamed of in using a little tact."

"No. I suppose you are right. It would be a great deal wiser. But I do get so tired of trickery and of nobody's being above board and honest, and of everybody's suspecting everybody else, that I sometimes can't stand it any longer. I was very foolish to-day in some things I said to the Baron, but I did enjoy it so. I told him about Mme. Duvalet, among

other things." Here the Queen laughed a little to herself.

"But Mme. Duvalet herself acted a part," the Mother Superior suggested. Honoria's face fell, and it was several seconds before she answered :

"I know she did, and it has always troubled me. If it is ever right to do evil that good may come, it seems as if it must be always right. The question, in my mind, is in how far it is fair to fight tyranny, falsehood, and deceit with their own weapons. I have thought about it until I am tired, and I cannot come to any satisfactory conclusion."

"If Your Majesty would consult Father Lalande," the Reverend Mother insinuated. Honoria laughed again.

"Consult a Jesuit as to whether the means justifies the end!"

Her companion made no answer, but unlocked a door in front of which they had been standing, and threw it back for the Queen to enter.

"Ah, the same old rooms!" the latter exclaimed. "I remember them perfectly. I am so glad to get back. There is such an air of

peace and tranquillity. I do not see a single change, but Nanon will have a great many to point out to me, I am sure. Her old eyes are as observing as ever, and she is delighted at the chance of having me to herself for a couple of weeks. She does not like my fine maids and my ladies-in-waiting any better than I do."

"Your Majesty does not enjoy her state?"

"No; I can't bear it! At least, to be quite honest, I hate it with one part of me, and enjoy it with another. The girlish, frivolous side of me likes it. I sometimes feel a very big lady as I trail into the drawing-room or the banquet hall with my suite following me. I'd give it up, though, Mother, if I could find—something better."

"Ah, the glory of this world passeth away," said the Mother Superior, piously.

"I suppose it would be a mixed metaphor to add, 'and leaves a bad taste in your mouth,'" the Queen remarked. Her companion did not know what a mixed metaphor was, so she did not reply, and Her Majesty went on to say:

"Do not let me keep you, Reverend Mother. I shall not mind being alone. In fact, that is what I have come for. Besides, Nanon will be

here before long, and there is not much opportunity for meditation where she is. I shall have to limit her to so many remarks a day if I am to have any peace. She is not a bit afraid of me now that I am a queen. She orders me around and scolds me just as she did when I was an insignificant little princess. In fact, I am not sure but that I am a little afraid of her."

After the Mother Superior left her, Honoria walked up and down the small garden that was separated from the big one by a stone wall. She had just seated herself on a garden bench, under a snowy pear tree, when the door in the wall opened, and a stout elderly woman appeared, accompanied by a little white cyclone, which precipitated itself on the Queen, licking her hands and face, and chewing her fingers in the exuberance of joyful surprise.

"Ah, Sunny, you are no respecter of persons," said Her Majesty, when she had succeeded in extricating herself a little. "Well, Nanon, so you 've got here?"

"Yes, Your Majesty, and a hard time enough I 've had of it, too, with those good-for-nothing girls, or fine ladies, I suppose I ought to

call them, hinderin' with the packing. Glory be to goodness, we've got away from them for a little while!" The Queen laughed.

"You look warm. Go in and get rested. These first spring days, delicious as they are, are very trying. Where are my things?"

"They are bringing them through the building, madam. There they are now. I must run, or they will put them with their locks to the wall."

"Don't unpack until you get cooled off, and then get one of the lay sisters to help you," the Queen called out after her. "Well, Sunny, is n't this too heavenly for words?" she said to the little terrier, who had subsided into her lap. "You see those tall trees over there? Well, they stand in a beautiful, beautiful park, more beautiful than ours because it is natural, and left more to itself; and in that wall is a little gate and in my pocket is a key to that little gate, and every day you and I will go and take a walk there, and we won't take any horrid old ladies in waiting, and nobody shall know anything about it. And you sha'n't have any cord on, but just tear around and chase birds and rabbits to your heart's content. And you

can get just as dirty as your dirty little instincts move you to. Is n't that rather a nice prospect, old boy? Your mistress has pleasant recollections of that park. No, don't lick your lips in that suggestive manner. I have n't anything for you to eat, and would n't give it to you if I had, you greedy, mercenary little pig of a dogums."

One could not find a more beautiful spot than the convent gardens. Hundreds of years of careful cultivation, added to a considerable number of natural advantages, had done their best. It was several acres in extent, with groups of forest trees alternating with sunny flower-beds of old-fashioned flowers. On the extensive walls were espaliered apricots and peaches, which otherwise would not have had time to ripen in the short northern summer. A large portion of the garden was given up to vegetables and small fruits, but the smaller one where the Queen sat was purely a flower garden.

Queen Honoria stayed there on the bench under the snowy pear tree, stroking Sunny's rotund little form, and drawing his smooth silky ears through her fingers, until the sound of a bell warned her that it was the evening recrea-

tion hour for the pupils of the convent. Presently she could hear voices distinctly from the garden beyond. Her Majesty sighed and waked up Sunny to say to him :

"It 's dreadful to be so lonely, Sunnykins ; and in the spring-time, too. Nobody ought to be lonely on such a lovely day as this : it is n't fair. Well, shall we go and see if we can make friends with the owners of those happy voices ? It is a great deal better for us than sitting moping, in this sentimental fashion. To be sure, I did promise Baron Hausman I would turn my thoughts to marriage."

Here Queen Honoria laughed, tumbled the injured Sunny out of her lap, and walked down the path and through the gate into the larger garden beyond.

## CHAPTER II.

‘WALKED SIMPLY CLAD, A QUEEN OF HIGH ROMANCES.’

THAT same evening at half-past seven o'clock Her Majesty was putting the finishing touches to her toilet in front of the six by eight-inch mirror that was the only temptation to vanity her bedroom gave. Nanon was standing beside her, disapproval in every line of her portly person. The toilet was not striking,—merely an ill-fitting gown of dark-blue calico, shoes trodden down at the heel, a faded Scotch plaid shawl, and a big flapping sun-bonnet of checked gingham.

“Well, Nanon, how do you like me?” the Queen asked.

“If Your Majesty wants my honest opinion—” she was beginning when her mistress interrupted her :

“About my dress, Nanon, nothing else. I know very well what your other opinions are ; and if you were not such an old coward, I’d make you go with me and chaperon me.”



“*I* certainly am not foolhardy,” Nanon remarked, meditatively.

“You need not be afraid. Nobody will ever accuse you of that. You can thank your lucky stars for it when you are sleeping peacefully in your comfortable bed. Otherwise you would n’t be there.”

“And if Your Majesty *will* go, I ’m sure I ’d rather go, too, for I certainly shall not sleep a wink thinking of the baby I ’ve carried in my arms so many times a’ wandering around the cold streets in the dead o’ night, like as not getting insulted by drunken men.” The Queen laughed heartily.

“You ridiculous old goose!” she exclaimed. “That *baby* is n’t wandering around the streets, and I don’t believe she ’d be insulted by drunken men if she were. You can’t go in any case,—not if I were the baby and had to carry myself in consequence. I would n’t be bothered with you and your eternal objections to anything I want to do. Besides, I ’d have to hire a policeman to pilot you over every crossing, and that would be a fine way to escape notice. Nobody will speak to such a fright as I am. Now, will they?”

"If Your Majesty wants my honest opinion, I 'm thinking there would n't be any danger except from a man with a cataract in both eyes."

"You certainly are no courtier, Nanon," laughed the Queen, "and I 'm heartily glad of it. Well, good-bye. Hold on to Sunny, and expect me when you see me. Nothing is going to happen to me. You are to believe that. I command you to. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Madam," Nanon replied meekly, wiping her eyes on the corner of her apron, thereby turning Sunny, whom she had gathered up under one arm, upside down. Sunny gave a yelp of mingled discomfort and rage as Her Majesty disappeared in the shadowy garden outside.

The key fitted exactly in the lock, and the small gate turned smoothly on its hinges, as everything about the convent was sure to do. Queen Honoria's heart was beating fast as she stepped out into the lane outside, that turned into a city street a few hundred yards further on. It was the first time in all her royal life that she had been alone in the streets by herself. She had never even set foot in them by night. In spite of her resolutions and theories,

her heart was beating appreciably faster as she approached the broad thoroughfare, already lighted, although the long spring twilight had still some time to last. She had a definite object in view, but she did not know how to attain it. Hiller, the young agitator, was to address a workmen's meeting at Unity Square. Where this was she did not know, and she had not dared inquire beforehand for fear of awakening suspicion. She had thought it would be easy to ask someone, but every person in the Saturday evening crowd that went hurrying by seemed to be intent on his own business. She was afraid of being rudely repulsed, so she walked on and on. Presently she turned into a street that was nearly empty. There were steps behind her, but the only person in sight was an old woman with a market basket, some yards in front of her, and she resolved to catch up with her and put her question to her. Just before she reached her, she noticed that the bottom of her poor old basket was loose and was dropping potatoes out on the street behind her. Honoria started forward to warn her, but before she could do so a man appeared from behind her, and called the old woman's attention

to the fact. His manner was kind and courteous, but the old woman preferred to lose her potatoes to any interference from outside ; for, after swearing vigorously at the man, she turned down a cross street and disappeared. Honoria had stopped to see the end of this little episode, and now, without meaning it, she laughed aloud. The man turned and smiled :

“ It was funny, was n't it ? ” he said as naturally as if they had been friends all their lives. “ Catch me telling an old woman she is losing her potatoes again.”

“ And so the many have to suffer for the faults of the few,” said Honoria. Then added : “ I was just going to do it myself, and I wanted to ask her the way to Unity Square, too ; but it is just as well I did n't.” The man looked at her curiously.

“ I am going there myself, to the working-man's meeting, and, if you will trust me to show you the way, I shall be very glad to. It would be hard to tell you, in this city of blind alleys and purposeless streets. I have no way of proving to you that I am a reliable guide,” he added. Honoria took a long look at him before she added, in her quietest manner :

"You would n't have told the old woman about the potatoes if you were not to be trusted. I will go with you."

"Thank you," said the man, putting up his hand as if to take off his cap, but changing his mind and letting it fall again before he did it. "You think I would have picked up the potatoes and carried them home for my own dinner if I had not been a respectable citizen?" he asked.

"Or changed them for a glass of beer," Honoria answered, demurely, keeping her eyes cast down. She felt a strange sense of exhilaration in talking to this unknown man alone out in the city at night. Perhaps the knowledge that it was not at all the proper thing to do added to the feeling. The man only gave a short laugh in reply to her last speech. Evidently he was not going to presume.

"Is it far?" she asked, presently. She could not lose such an opportunity as this of talking to a real workingman. At least, he was dressed in workingman's clothes, although his voice and manner were those of a gentleman. Honoria wondered. Perhaps there was not the difference between the educated artisan and the

gentleman that she had been led to suppose. It was a voice as refined as her own that answered :

“ It is quite a distance yet. You are not going to the meeting? We are a little late for that.”

“ Yes, I am. Is n't it all right? I read in the paper that women went. I am anxious to hear what this Hiller has to say ; what cure for our troubles he has to offer. I hope we sha' n't be too late to hear him.” The man smiled a smile that Honoria did not understand as he answered :

“ Oh, no ; we shall hear him fast enough. He is the last speaker. But there is no *cure*,” he added, a little sadly. “ All we can hope to find are alleviations and remedies. The disease lies too deep ; it is in the essence of human nature.”

“ You are interested in these problems ? ” Honoria asked, a little timidly.

“ They are the greater part of my life.”

“ Then do you hate the aristocracy and those who have more than you ? ”

“ Heaven forbid ! They are not to blame. There will always be those that feast and those

that starve so long as human beings are turned out on the present pattern. One of the things we hope to bring about is a better feeling between the two classes."

"I 'm so glad!" Honoria exclaimed, impulsively, and then blushed under her sunbonnet, as the young man asked, a trifle curiously:

"It is a vital matter to you, then?"

"Only that hatred seems so narrow-minded to me. Of course, we can't help having personal dislikes, and I would n't if we could; they give so much more flavor to our likes. But class hatreds and race prejudices belong to small, provincial, ignorant minds." The man's face lit up suddenly.

"So you think that, too?" he said. "Narrow-mindedness is the name of the disease I spoke of a few minutes ago. It is the curse of the human race. If we could make people look at things in a large way, the millenium would begin here on earth immediately. There would be no need to alter a condition of this earthly existence to make it possible."

"It would be cancelling the intruding, disconcerting personal factor," said Honoria, and then they both looked at each other. Their

words were so out of keeping with their appearances. The young man's face lit up again—a trick it had. Honoria compared it to the kindling of a candle in the Jack-o'-lantern one of her pages had made; and then she smiled to herself at her simile. The clear-cut face before her was such a contrast to the grinning, orange mask she had thought of.

“So you realized that, too!” he exclaimed. “I have believed that I could not find one who did among all the human souls in this crowded, benighted city. You have encouraged me. If there is one, perhaps there are others. I will believe that there are. If I only knew how to discover them!”

“Do you think, even with hundreds to help you, you could make the majority, or even a small minority, accept the belief that it is inward not outward improvement that this poor old world needs?” The light died out of the young man's eyes.

“No,” he said. “Honestly, I don't. I only like to dream it occasionally. Nine hundred and ninety-nine one thousandths of the people in this world are made incapable of looking beyond personal grievances and personal



interest to abstract truth and justice, and nothing short of a miracle could change them."

"I have had my dreams, too," Honoria went on; "dreams of a time when the lion will lie down with the lamb, when envy and small meannesses and jealousies, and dissimulation and hypocrisy will no longer exist; when universal love will prevail."

"Don't use that word—say 'universal goodwill,'" the young man said, abruptly. Honoria was not used to being dictated to in this manner, and she drew herself up a little proudly. "I beg your pardon," he continued, "I should not have spoken so."

"What did you mean?" she asked, a little mollified. Her companion hesitated.

"I suppose it is only fair to tell you now, though I would rather not. We seemed to be so much in sympathy on this subject that I spoke as I would have done to a friend."

"You need not tell me if you do not choose," said Honoria.

"Ah, but I must now. It is only that I object to the stealing of the word love to describe a feeling of kindness, of charity; it is a desecration." Honoria stared. It was the last

thing she would have expected, judging from his uplifted, impersonal manner.

"But is it not the greater of the two, this feeling toward our fellow-creatures as a whole, and has it not, therefore, a right to the best word?" she asked.

"The greater? Yes, as a bird's-eye view of a country is greater, grander, than the heart of a dense forest, or a little piece of a brook bordered by alders. But which do we care most about?"

"I suppose tastes differ," Honoria answered.

"Which do *you* like best?" he asked, introducing the personal element into the conversation for the first time. "I beg your pardon," he went on quickly, adding, as she had done: "Don't answer if you don't want to."

"I have n't the slightest objection to telling you that the bird's-eye view is too grand, too uplifted, too cold, too lonely for me."

"And for me," the young man assented. "And though love of humanity is a great and glorious thing, human ties and affections are needed to make this earth tolerable. I can't imagine any scheme of life being endurable that does not include these. But here we are

at Unity Square. It has been a long walk, as I told you it would be."

"What a crowd of people!" exclaimed Honoria. "One could get lost among them."

"You know your way home again?" asked her guide.

"Not the first thing about it," she admitted frankly. "I was too busy talking to you. But I suppose any one can tell me the way to the North Gate."

"I will come for you and take you there myself, if you will allow me to. It is my way, too. Suppose you meet me at this place at—let me see—" He took out his watch, a gold watch on a silver chain. A little gold whistle of a curious design was also fastened to the end of the chain. Honoria had been about to protest. She did not wish this stranger to walk home with her, and had determined to give him the slip in the crowd if he suggested it. Now, however, she gave a sudden startled look at him as he stood with the electric light at the end of the square falling full on him, for something she saw made her change her mind. Her companion misunderstood her scrutiny.

"You are thinking my watch is too handsome

for a man in my rank of life? Well, so it is; but it was a present, and I am attached to it."

"No," Honoria answered; "I was thinking I had seen a watch like that before, with a stag hunt chased on the back."

"I don't see where you could have. My sister drew the design for this herself. It was the last thing she gave me before she died." He added this last in an undertone, evidently forgetting that workingmen's sisters do not usually give them gold watches made by a special design. A pleased look that would have been a smile except for his words came into Honoria's face.

"What time shall I meet you?" she inquired, "if it is not too much to ask of you."

"Not at all. It is my way. I am glad to be of service, and doubly glad that you are willing to trust me. After all, I do n't dare set a time. I will be here directly after the last speech. There is only one more after this fellow finishes."

"Is that Hiller? I hope we have n't missed him."

"No; that is a saddler named Baum. Hiller speaks next. Well, *au revoir!*"

In a second he was lost to sight in the mass of human beings in front of her. Honoria moved closer, and skirted around the edge of the crowd, hoping to find a place where she could hear better, for only an occasional word of the speaker's came to her ears where she stood. These seemed of a very commonplace nature, so she wondered more and more at the cheers that kept going up on all sides. Presently, by a shifting that took place before her, she managed to slip into a much better position. She was hemmed in and jostled by workmen in the roughest of clothes, she, their queen, whose royal person no mortal was privileged to profane with a touch. They, her subjects, did not even turn to look at her as she stood there, in her poor, respectable, ugly garments. There was an occasional woman throughout the crowd to keep her in countenance. The shouts kept on, and soon she saw the occasion of them. A man had ascended the platform behind the speaker, and had seated himself on one of the wooden chairs there. It was he whom the people were cheering. Shouts of "Hiller!" "Hiller!" went up on all sides. The orator tried to go on, but they drowned

his voice. He turned and said something to the man behind him, and then sat down himself in the chair the latter vacated. It had taken only one glance—one surprised, startled glance—for Honoria to recognize in the newcomer her companion of the evening. A quick flush reddened her cheeks under her sunbonnet. Her heart beat faster, and she felt she must have air, but forgot this need the next second, for Hiller began to speak. It was the same voice she had been listening to, but so clear and distinct and forcible that its character seemed changed. A deadly silence fell on the crowd as he stood before them.

“You are not very polite, my friends,” he began. Honoria could hear every syllable. “Why did n’t you give Baum a show to finish? What if you have heard him a few more times than you have me? I suppose to-morrow I shall have to give way to some later comer, no matter how eager I may be to have you hear the words I have to say?” He paused, and a voice from the crowd called out :

“We thought ye were n’t coming.” Hiller turned and addressed the speaker directly.

“Did n’t I say I would, Herman? I was de-

tained, or I should have been here before. I am sorry I did not hear Baum, for, although we don't always agree, he often suggests my best points to me. I am, as I said, a newcomer, but I have nothing new to say to you, only some truths as old as the hills. What I am hoping is that I shall put them in a little newer form, so that they may be more likely to attract your attention and persuade you to think about them a little." With this short introduction, evidently designed to soothe the wounded vanity of his colleague, Hiller plunged into his subject, the political condition of the country. It was so bold and fearless that Honoria shuddered a little as she listened. If any of her, or, to be more accurate, Baron Hausman's emissaries were in the crowd, and they doubtless were, they would not allow such words to go unremarked and unpunished. Hiller could not know the risk he ran. She would warn him; for, once convicted of treasonable proceedings, she might, for all she knew, be powerless to save him from banishment, or, perhaps, worse. Besides, how could she espouse warmly the cause of this handsome young agitator? At first he spoke of the excessive taxation, the

corruption in the law courts, the oppression of the people and its results ; and every man was with him, as was shown by the cheers that were with difficulty suppressed on all sides. Honoria was disappointed. His speech, true as it was in substance, and moderate in expression, understating rather than overstating the facts which even she had recognized, seemed, as Baron Hausman had said, too much like that of a demagogue stirring up the people. No true friend of theirs would have emphasized grievances that they were evidently, judging from the ejaculations and remarks on all sides of her, only too well aware of. How did he dare to rouse a people too ignorant to be influenced by justice or reason ? Presently, however, he came to a full stop. Then the cheering broke forth uproariously. He waited for it to subside before he went on, in clearer, more impressive tones than before :

“ I do not think you will cheer me so warmly when I finish what I have to say. Do you know what my motive was in bringing so prominently before you the oppression under which we live ? It was to show you that the words which I have to say to you are uttered with full



realization of the political situation. Why are those in power corrupt and merciless?" He paused a moment. "Because you, the people, are corrupt and merciless yourselves. Those above you grind you down, but do you not in your turn grind down those beneath you? Is there a man among you who buys and sells honestly when he can do it dishonestly without being found out? Those of you who are landlords in a small way, what is the limit to the rent you charge? I say it is the limit of what you can get, regardless of value. Some of you are money-lenders with your small savings. Do you ever think of oppression when you demand 20, 30, and even 50 per cent. of the poor day laborer, whose wife and children are ill with the fever bred by the unspeakable nastiness in which you live? Have you a right to hate with a bitter hatred all who are above yourselves, when not a single one of those practices of theirs which you condemn but is repeated in accordance with your opportunities in your own lives? You have your clubs—are the officials in those so honest that you should condemn officials in positions of public trust?" A significant murmur went through the crowd. "Phy-

sician, heal thyself ! Do you think that injustice and oppression would be tolerated one short week, if public spirit—the public spirit that is the private spirit of every good man's heart—were against it? Certainly not. I repeat it,—the reason why the government is so corrupt is because you, the people, condemn corruption only when it is a corruption that interferes with your own greed of gain." He spoke a few minutes longer in the same strain. Honoria and those around her stood spellbound, amazed at the man's boldness, his eloquence, and carried away by the vehemence, the power, the charm of this young workingman's personality. Not a sound was heard. The people hung their heads and were ashamed. They were not so debased but that they recognized the truth momentarily when it was put before them in so graphic a way. When Hiller sat down, they cheered him, but not so enthusiastically as before.

Honoria waited till the crowd dispersed a little, then walked slowly to the spot where she had agreed to meet Hiller. She saw him coming towards her, accompanied by several workmen, to whom he seemed to be explaining

something ; so, making sure that he saw her, she moved off down the street in front of him. Presently he overtook her, having got rid of his friends, and walked along by her side in silence. Evidently he had not yet come down from the clouds. Honoria did not say a word for a few minutes, then she broke out impulsively :

"I do not see how you dared. I don't see how they took it as they did. I thought they would hiss you, or stone you, or something."

"They did not because I have gained some personal influence over them. How long it will last, I cannot say. By to-morrow they will be calling it abuse—not truth. If I could be with them all the time, I might make something of them, but, as it is, they have too much time in between times for reaction—for their native contemptibleness to come to the surface."

"I do not know that I believe this myself," Honoria began slowly. "I am only asking for information. Would it not be better to go at them more gently, not to risk your influence by such sledge-hammer methods?"

"You do not know them. They are so low down, so besotted, that gentle methods have no effect on them. My only hope is in the

sledge-hammer, and even that is a very faint one. We can do little or nothing for the men and women; but if we could only reach the boys and girls!"

"How could that be done?" Honoria asked.

"I have travelled in many countries and seen many ways. We could have Boys' Clubs, Settlements; but where are the people to run them? The middle classes are uneducated, unenlightened, fifty years behind the rest of the world. The aristocracy are absentees, and would consider such work beneath them if they were here. And the Queen—" Here he shrugged his shoulders slightly.

"What about her?" Honoria asked bravely.

"I confess I had hopes of her, from something I knew of her childhood," Hiller said, slowly. "But, no doubt, power and luxury have spoiled her, as they do the rest of us. She is evidently completely under old Hausman's thumb, like her uncle before her. She has been on the throne a year now, and not one single measure has she taken for her subjects' relief; and yet she must know—she is not blind and deaf and dumb—the terrible internal condition of the country."

"What is the condition of the country?"

Honorina asked, resolutely putting aside a desire to justify herself until she should have learned more of that which she had come out to learn. "You said much that was new to me to-night, but some of it I did not understand, not being so familiar with the facts as the rest of your audience. Can you tell me in general terms so that I shall understand?"

"The treasury is nearly bankrupt; there is danger of war from two different countries; the people are on the verge of a rebellion; demagogues are at work on all sides; our resources and our credit are exhausted; the men in positions of public trust are corrupt or incapable—often both; the only justice is bought; our currency is debased; our army is a farce; it is neither officered, equipped, nor armed; and at the helm we have an ignorant girl, absorbed in spending money on court festivities and selfishly indifferent to the welfare of her people."

"Perhaps she does not know about all this," Honorina suggested.

"We have sent her a number of petitions, not one of which she has condescended to take the slightest notice of."

"Perhaps she never got them."

“Oh, she must have! They were confided to trustworthy hands to deliver. Still, I am not blaming her. How could one expect her to be different, considering the school she has been brought up in! Governess and influences of Hausman’s selection are not calculated to make a noble or an unselfish character. I do not believe she is happy, even as happiness goes, all the same. The only picture I have ever happened to see of her did not look so. Poor girl, I pity her, and, if I am not mistaken, she has a hard future before her.” He said this in so sympathetic a tone that the tears came into Honoria’s eyes. Fortunately, her flapping sun-bonnet hid them. She wished she could tell her companion that she was not so selfish and indifferent as he thought her, but did not dare trust her voice to speak, even in generalities. Neither of them said a word for some squares. Then Honoria bethought herself that she was wasting a valuable opportunity.

“Mr. Hiller,” she began, a little timidly. Hiller did not reply; and she was just getting up courage to speak to him again when he turned his head toward her with a:

“I beg your pardon. Were you speaking to me?”

"I said 'Mr. Hiller,' " she replied. To her surprise, she saw by the light that happened to be above them that Hiller flushed slightly. He did not say anything, however, for a minute more, then he broke out with :

"I've got to tell you. I cannot stand sailing under false colors when it can be helped. My name is n't Hiller at all. I had to assume it, with the greatest reluctance, because the one I go by is, for a certain reason, obnoxious to the people. I could n't work against that disadvantage, too. I don't want any more dissimulation than I can help, though."

"Am I expected to ask what your name is?" Honoria inquired. The young man flushed again.

"I don't think I will tell you that." Honoria blushed, too.

"I beg your pardon," she said. "I thought, perhaps, you expected me to ask; and because it is awkward not having anything to address a person by. 'Say' is n't very satisfactory. Still, I don't really need a name, for we have only a few squares more, and we shall probably never see each other again."

"I should hate to think that," said her companion, so respectfully that she could not take

offence. "I have a strange presentiment that we shall come together again, not once but many times. We are too much in sympathy to lose each other utterly. My Christian name is Hugo, and there is no objection to calling a workingman by that, is there?"

"No, not a workingman," Honoria answered, with a smile, "nor a working woman. My name is Nora, and you can call me so next time we meet."

"Ah, I see you don't believe in my presentiment. Well, we shall see!"

"Frankly, I don't. I must leave you here. I am very grateful to you,—not only for your escort, but for what you said to the people and to me. I shall not forget either." This last was said in the true royal manner. She threw back her head with a little imperious gesture she had; her sunbonnet fell back; and, for the first time, he caught a glimpse of her face. It was but for a minute, though. The next she had disappeared in the comparative darkness of a cross-street.

The convent clock was striking eleven as Honoria slipped through the little gate in the wall into the smaller garden inside; but it was



long past the early spring dawn before she went to sleep. She tried to think of what she had learned that night of her people and her duties to them ; but her mind was full of a delight experienced for the first time in her life,—the joy of companionship on a perfect equality. Never before had she said what she thought with perfect frankness to any man or woman, or they to her. Mme. Duvalet had been very particular that all the forms should be observed. She had treated her with an almost exaggerated respect, and had let no one else come near enough for freedom of speech to be possible. Honoria herself distrusted friends that had so much to gain by her friendship.

One little incident of the evening had made an especial impression. A drunken man had reeled around a corner, and Hugo had quickly taken hold of her arm and pulled her out of his way. The remembrance of his touch and the strength in his arm, the consciousness of protection, stayed with her all through the night.

## CHAPTER III.

### FOR THE THIRD TIME.

THE next day was Sunday. Honoria punctiliously attended mass in the morning; the afternoon she spent in the garden, pretending to read, but really thinking of the remarkable adventures of the night before. She felt deliciously and comfortably tired, and the relief from the minutiae of court etiquette was very great. Nanon came out occasionally, evidently bent on conversation, but she was not encouraged, and soon gave up the attempt. Monday morning Honoria took Sunny and wandered out into the park that stretched to the north of the convent grounds. It belonged to Count Waldeck, one of the numerous absentee landlords of the country, and was rigidly protected by walls and keepers from public intrusion. The little gate in the convent wall was a relic of the days when the old castle in its midst had been inhabited, and there were frequent

comings and goings between castle and convent. It opened by the same key as the door into the lane.

It was a beautiful day, and Honoria passed a happy morning under the huge old beeches and oaks. Sunny was ecstatically happy, and almost raced his little legs off. The deer had become so wild from the seclusion in which they lived that they took to their heels at the crackling of a dry twig. She occasionally saw them, either singly or in groups, watching her movements from a little distance. Not a human being did she meet. Although she was so utterly unaccustomed to solitude, she was not afraid, being, partly by nature and partly by education and self-discipline, of an unusually fearless disposition.

It was with an intense, though subdued, excitement that she put on her sunbonnet that evening and slipped out into the lane. She could not suppress a secret hope that she might meet Hugo, as she now called him to herself, and it was with a feeling of disappointment that she let herself in again at ten. The evening had been uneventful. She had gone to church and watched the people, and afterward•

had gathered a great many details about the poverty and squalor in which they lived, but that was all.

Tuesday night was the same, except for a talk she had with, or rather to, a sewing girl whom she found leaning disconsolately on the parapet of a bridge over the river, watching the dark water flow by underneath. She confessed to being out of work, and Honoria had a strong suspicion that she was considering making away with herself. She talked to her for a while, getting monosyllabic or evasive answers. Finally she invited her to come to a neighboring eating-house and have some supper. The girl looked at her suspiciously and gave an unceremonious refusal. Presently, however, hunger or some other motive was too strong for her, so she changed her mind and accepted when Honoria renewed her invitation. Her Majesty now found herself in a difficult position. She had never been in a public restaurant in her life, and did not know the etiquette. Did she ask for anything she wanted, and did she offer to pay in advance? She remembered that they never did in the novels she had read, and that the technical term was to order.

Accordingly she extricated herself by asking her companion if she would order what she liked for supper. At first the girl did not know what to make of such munificence, and Honoria had some difficulty in inducing her to believe she meant it. Finally, however, she ordered sausages and beer, and fell on these delicacies when they arrived with a wolfish appetite. Honoria tried to follow her example, but the plates were so dirty, and the odors of the place so strong, and the food so greasy and badly cooked, that she could not swallow a mouthful. The girl apparently did not care whether her companion ate or not, so long as she had enough. When, at last, she declared herself satisfied, and Honoria had paid the bill, they went out into the street again, and Honoria invited her to come to supper with her again the next night, hoping to find her in a more accessible and communicative frame of mind. The girl agreed willingly, but was evidently suspicious of Honoria's motives for asking her, and not averse to letting her see that this was so. In reply to a question, she said she knew of a better place, if she was not particular about the price, adding that she liked good cooking

as much as any one, and knew it when she saw it, too. This remark encouraged Honoria greatly, it being the first one that the girl had volunteered.

At dusk the next evening she was on her way to keep her appointment, and was just turning down the street that led to the bridge, where she had agreed to meet her guest, when she heard a dog bark behind her and turned in time to see an impudent little white terrier, with a black-and-tan head, march up to a mongrel fully twice his size and insult him. Honoria's first thought was how much the terrier looked like Sunny; but it did not take her quarter of a minute to realize that it was Sunny, and that the mongrel was about to demolish him. Evidently the little rascal had slipped out after her and was following in ambush when his fighting instinct had become too strong for his discretion. It was not often, in his pampered, aristocratic life, that he had the chance of a scrap. Some men who were standing on the corner urged the dogs on. A feeling of faintness came over Honoria, but she paid no attention to it. Before she could get to them, she saw that the mongrel had pinned Sunny down and was about

to shake the life out of him if he would not surrender, and she knew that was not Sunny's way, even when he attacked mongrels twice his size. He would die, if must be, but he would not yield. His mistress had often noticed this trait in him with fond pride, and the remembrance gave wings to her feet.

"For shame!" she called out to the men, and then she was in the same heap with the cursing, biting dogs. It was no use; all her strength was not enough to make the mongrel let go. Sunny was getting weaker. "Will no one help me?" she cried out imploringly, when some one caught her by the arm and dragged her away, and the next second a stream of water from the fire hydrant on the corner was turned full on the dogs. Fortunately they happened to be in a direct line with it. The mongrel let go and Sunny lay on the ground, a wet, motionless, little form. Honoria started to run to him.

"Wait, you will get wet. I will bring him to you," said a voice she recognized—Hugo's voice. "He is not dead," he added, consolingly. "Only the breath is knocked out of him, poor little fellow. Come in here and we will see what we can do for him." He led the way into

a bakery, holding the dripping dog in his arms. The woman in charge, who evidently knew him and had been watching the fight from the window, now bustled around, bringing a clean flour sack to dry the dog with and warm water for his wounds. Then she went back to the front of the shop to attend a customer. Honoria started to take Sunny from his rescuer.

"No, let me keep him," he protested. "He will only get you wet. There, he is all right. See!" Sunny opened one eye and looked feebly around the shop until he saw his mistress. Then his tail gave a limp wag. Honoria sank on her knees beside him.

"O Sunny, you rascal!" she exclaimed. "What did you follow me for? You have n't a bit of sense, you dear little goose. Yes, that's right. You ought to look ashamed. He understands perfectly what I am saying to him," she added to Hugo. He smiled indulgently as he answered:

"He is a fine, plucky, little fellow, and will be as good as new in a little while. There is only this one bad bite on his neck. The others don't amount to anything. There, now he can go to you. Why, your hand is bleeding!"



"It is nothing—only a scratch. The other dog did it. I have hardly been conscious of it."

"You must let me get something and do it up for you," Hugo said, and was out of the room before she could protest. She was still wondering where he had gone when he came back with a basin of warm water, some salve, and a handkerchief.

"How brave you are," he said, admiringly, as he was tying up her hand. The handkerchief she noticed was very fine, but had no mark on it. "I shall never forget the way you flung yourself on those dogs."

"Just wait till you see me with a mouse."

"Are you afraid of them?"

"I should say I was."

"I 'd like to witness an encounter."

"I should n't like to have you, unless the alternative was to be alone with the mouse." Hugo laughed heartily, while Sunny lifted his head and gave a more vigorous wag to his tail than any before.

"I believe he knows the word 'mouse,' don't you, Precious? 'Mouse,' 'mouse,' Sunny!" But Sunny refused to take any more notice of

the world around him. "I don't know what to do with him," she continued. "I have an engagement at eight, and I can't take him with me. I did not know that he was following me."

"Leave him here with me and let me doctor his wounds a little more. You did n't know I was a veterinary? Well, I am—in an unprofessional way. I lodge over this shop, and if you stop here on your way home and send Mrs. Berger up for me, I will bring him down."

"But are n't you going out yourself?"

"No; I was intending to stay in all the evening. I have an article to finish for one of the papers. Do let me! I shall be glad to."

"I am under such heavy obligations to you already that I suppose one more or less does not matter."

"It ought not to matter between two people who think so much alike as we do;—not that I admit the obligation. You see, I was right about our coming together again,—though it took a dog fight to bring it about."

"I am very glad you were. You don't know what this little dog is to me."

"I can guess it, for I have had dogs of my

own, and he is such a brave, intelligent little specimen. I will tell Mrs. Berger that you will call for the dog. Good-by."

Honorina was afraid her new friend would be gone, as she was a few minutes late to the appointment; but she was there in the same place, by the parapet of the bridge. She looked a little less forlorn than the night before, and had evidently taken some pains with her toilet. Honorina apologized for being late, and asked her to show her the way to the place they were going to have supper. The girl's suspicions were evidently not quieted; but, feeling herself abundantly able to take care of herself, she had apparently made up her mind to get what she could out of her new acquaintance. She was a little less sullen and uncommunicative, but impressed Honorina as a person in deep trouble as well as in mere bodily want. She was disappointed in not being able to get her to talk and tell her about the sewing girls and the class to which she belonged generally. If she had had months before her instead of ten days, she felt she would have liked to try to do something for the girl individually. As it was, however, it was her duty simply to

gather all the knowledge she could of her people as a whole. After the supper, which was more of an improvement on that of the night before from her guest's point of view than her own, they walked back to the bridge together. Here the girl left her—to go home, she said. Honoria leaned for a moment against the parapet, idly watching her as she went back over the bridge towards the opposite side of the river ; and then, feeling very tired after the excitement of the evening, she sat down on a bench built in the side of the bridge to rest. Where she sat was in the shadow, but the girl was in the bright glare of an electric light. Presently, to her surprise, she saw some one whom she took to be Hugo approaching. When he met the girl he stopped and spoke to her for a minute or two, and then they both went on their way. She could not tell why, but this little incident gave her a troubled feeling. She had not thought of his knowing girls like that. In the hope that he would not see her, she leaned closer to the parapet ; but Hugo apparently had sharp eyes.

“ Oh, is it you ? ” he said, when he was opposite her. “ Your little friend is getting along

finely. I left him in the shop with Mrs. Berger for ten minutes. I had forgotten that I had to leave my MS. at the newspaper office." As he spoke all her vague anxieties left her.

"I am so glad," she said. Then added: "Do you know anything about that girl you were just talking to?"

"Yes, a great deal." Then he broke off with a laugh: "Were you the person who took her to supper?"

"Yes," she answered. "Why do you laugh?"

"At what she just told me; I don't know whether I ought to tell you."

"Yes, do," pleaded Honoria.

"She said she was sure you wanted her for some bad purpose, but that she had fooled you. She said that you had n't 'got much change out of her.'"

"No, I did n't. All I wanted of her was to get her to tell me something about sewing girls, but I could n't get a word out of her. I knew she distrusted me. She showed it very plainly. You don't believe her then?" Hugo answered only with another laugh.

"Many people would tell that she—her name

is Lizzy something—is not a fit associate for you, and perhaps you will think so yourself when you know her story. May I sit down here? She is very unhappy, poor girl, and has learned to distrust people's motives by hard experience. One of the foresters on Count Waldeck's estate has been making love to her for a long time; but a widow with some money came in his way, and he married her a month ago. And now he says he never had the slightest idea of marrying Lizzy; that she was n't a fit match for him. She was and is very much in love with him, and made herself very unhappy, and neglected her work so that she lost her place, and what she does now, poor girl, I do not know. Some people whom I have interested in her see that she gets an occasional square meal. And nobody will give her anything to do because of this affair: she has not kept her wrongs to herself." Honoria was silent. "I am sorry I told you this if it will make you any less kind to her," he added. "Someway, after our talk the other night, I can not believe that it will."

"No," she answered slowly, "it would make me kinder to her if I were likely to see her

again. Perhaps I am wrong—many people would say that I am—but I cannot have the feeling most women have towards our sisters who transgress—I cannot even call it sin—when it is through love they do it. We, those who have more than they, do not know what temptation is. When I look at the lives they lead, utterly devoid of any sweetness or light, I do not wonder that an occasional one slips and falls, but that they all do not. Love, first love especially, comes like a fairy godmother with a wand in her hand to all of us, but it must be an angel from heaven to those who live in dark places of the earth. No matter how many sermons they have had preached at them, how can they distrust a power that works such miracles with the squalor and wretchedness around them? No, I cannot judge them. I have never been tempted ; and, besides, my head would always be stronger than my heart. But suppose I were obliged to lead the existence this Lizzy and such as she lead ; suppose I had less to lose, as little as they ; suppose I had less education ; suppose my temperament were different, how can I say that I would be any better than they? No! I would pity them from the

depths of my heart, but I would not condemn them nor shun them." Hugh took off his cap before she finished speaking.

"You thanked me for something I said, and I want to thank you for this. It is what I have always longed to hear a virtuous woman say." Honoria blushed and looked confused behind her sunbonnet. She rose to her feet and moved on, saying:

"I did not mean to say that about myself. I have read about the sudden impulse of confidence one has with strangers, and now I see it is true."

"Yes," Hugo answered, "because we can relieve our minds by confiding, while, all the time, we know the person we are talking to knows too little about us to be able to put two and two together and get any definite knowledge."

"I wonder how Sunny is," Honoria remarked when they had walked a little way in silence.

"Is that the name of your dog? By the way, has n't our gracious sovereign a dog called Sunny? It seems to me I read an account in the paper of his skill in catching a rat or a squirrel." Honoria's heart stood still. She



gave a quick look at her companion, but seeing he was evidently perfectly unsuspecting, she collected her wits and answered calmly :

“ I believe she has; but when I named this dog, I did not know there was another of the same name in the whole world. He was such a bright, jolly little fat puppy that Sunny seemed to suit him exactly.”

“ It is a curious coincidence,” Hugo remarked as he opened the door into the bakery. Sunny was asleep in a little box filled with excelsior. There was no one else in the shop. Although he was glad to see his mistress, Honoria declared jealously that he was equally glad to see her companion.

“ He knows you turned the hydrant on the horrid big dog, don't you, Sunny darling? ”

“ You had better leave him here for a day or two and let me take care of him for you,” Hugo proposed. “ You would have to carry him if you took him now. I will leave him here with Mrs. Berger when I am out—she is devoted to him already—and you can get him any time you like. You need n't see me at all,” he said at last, with a smile.

“ I am not afraid of you,” Honoria was begin-

ning. It was the second impulse of coquetry that she had had in her life. The first was when she had told him he might call her Nora. After this, it would not have been possible to keep count of them. Now, however, she changed her remark to: "I am not afraid to go home alone," for Hugo had caught up his cap as she moved towards the door, as if to accompany her.

"I won't insist if you don't want me to," he said, "but I should like to very much."

"You may go as far as the North Gate," Honoria said graciously.

"You are anxious to see something of the people?" he asked, when they were out in the street.

"Yes. I want to know how they live and whether they are as poor and oppressed as they are said to be."

"It could not be exaggerated. I could show you all you wish to see, if you would trust me to go about with you a little. You can ask Mrs. Berger about me. She will tell you that I am a model lodger, sober, decent, and respectable."

"I don't need to ask her. I am accustomed

to use my own judgment about people. Some-way, you have inspired me with a great deal of confidence, and yet this is only the third time I have seen you. I will go anywhere with you that you are willing to take me, and be glad of the opportunity."

"Thank you. Suppose you meet me at the North Gate at eight to-morrow evening then. I don't want to lessen my claim to friendship by one third, but is n't this only the second time we have met?" Honoria smiled as she answered :

"I wondered if you would notice the discrepancy. No ; it is three times, but I am not going to tell you about the other one, so it is no use to ask."

"How delightfully mysterious! Will you *never* tell me ?"

"Never, though I won't promise you will never find it out. I wish I could. You see I have the advantage of you."

"Indeed, you have. I am dreadfully curious, but I suppose I must n't tease. Is n't it strange how people make an impression on us irrespective of anything they do or say, or any knowledge we have of them?" he went on. "I think if you had not said a word to me, I should still

have been able to laugh at what Lizzy said to me about you."

"I think we have some mental organ that takes a photograph, a flash light, of the people we meet, and developes it on our brain," said Honoria.

"Yes," he assented, "some people do not possess it at all, while others have an unusually perfect instrument. The funny part is that we each think, like people with their cameras, that our own is the most reliable."

"Warranted to take the most faithful and life-like pictures," she added. "But here we are. You said eight o'clock, did n't you? Good night. I am not going to thank you again. I am tired of doing it. I shall just take your services for granted after this."

"I wish you would. Then I shall really feel that you are a friend. That is the way it should be between friends,—friends that are friends, not mere acquaintances."

"Friends when we do not know a single thing about each other, not even each other's names!" exclaimed Honoria, who, woman-like, found it hard to keep strictly impersonal with this interesting companion.

“That is not necessary, so long as we know something of each other’s minds. Besides, I do know your name.” He paused, and Honoria’s heart stood still until he added, “Good-night, Nora.” He vanished in the darkness before she could protest that she had n’t meant that ; that she had been sure she should never see him again.

## CHAPTER IV.

### IN THE PARK.

HONORIA never forgot the scenes her new friend took her to the next night and for several successive nights after that. She had not dreamed that there were such places or such people in the world, much less in the little corner of it that she called hers. It made her sad at first, horribly sad ; and it took all the pleasure she felt in Hugo's society to counteract this impression. At last she blamed herself for not taking it more to heart ; but how could she when she was tasting for the first time in her life the delights of a friendship with a man who was her superior in every essential ? It was a pleasure to be out-talked, won-over, made to believe that which she did not wish to believe ; for, in spite of her dabbling in democratic ideas, Honoria was a thorough aristocrat at heart, with many of the

prejudices of her class only veneered with modern ideas.

Saturday night she and Hugo were out until very late, first attending a meeting at which he spoke, and then wandering through streets and alleys where night was turned into a hideous mockery of day, and appalling sights were to be met with on all sides. Hugo often urged her to go back, but Honoria was resolute ; she wanted to see all there was to see.

Sunday morning, after mass, she and Sunny started for a walk in Waldeck park. She was tired, and would gladly have stayed quietly in the convent garden, but Nanon had a grievance and was dying to talk of it, and refused to be suppressed. Honoria could not bear to hurt her feelings by a direct snub, and a long story about a matter of no consequence was the last thing she wanted to listen to this sunshiny Sunday morning, when, for some strange reason, everything,—trees, sky, grass, and the sunshine itself,—seemed to have taken on a mysterious glamour. She could not take refuge in the large garden, because the children, with whom she had made herself uncomfortably popular, hung around her neighborhood and cast wistful

glances at her if she did not talk and play with them. Besides, she wanted to be alone, far away from every one, and free to give herself up undisturbed to the glory and the dream. So she slipped on her gingham gown and sun-bonnet, thinking she might get up courage to take a little walk in the city afterwards, for she had not yet ventured out by daylight, and slipped through the little gate into the park beyond.

She had not been in the park for nearly a week—a week of heavenly weather that had made a lovely promise into a glorious fulfilment. Last week it had been spring-like, but to-day it was spring. Honoria took off her close sun-bonnet and hung it on her arm as she wandered idly about for an hour or so, and then made her way to her favorite spot,—a little hollow surrounded by seven huge beeches, and filled with big, gray, lichen-covered rocks, among which tall ferns grew. The ground was damp, but the rocks were warm and sun-dried. It was Sunny's favorite spot, too, there were such deep, mysterious crannies and holes for him to poke his inquisitive little nose into ; so he ran on eagerly in front of his mistress when he saw she



was headed that way. Presently she heard his shrill little staccato bark, and—she could not be mistaken—a voice she knew was calling him by name.

“Down, Sunny, you rascal! Have n’t you any manners? Don’t eat me up. No, sir, I don’t like to be kissed by you. How, in the name of Cain, did you get here? Run away again, I suppose.” Honoria stepped forward. Her friend Hugo was lying on the top of a flat rock, his legs in the sun, and his head in the shade of a beech. He jumped to his feet when he saw her; and she laughed aloud at his surprise.

“I should not have known you if it had not been for Sunny and your laugh,” he said, his face still lit up at the pleasure of seeing her. “I have never had a really good look at you before, so excuse me if I seem to stare. Come up here where I am and sit down.”

“To be stared at? No, I thank you.”

“I won’t if you’ll only come. I was joking.”

“Very well. If I had known I was going to run across you, I’d have kept a tighter hold on my sunbonnet. I seem to have lost it.”

“Why do you care? Do you suppose I am

idiot enough to think sunbonnets your normal attire?"

"I don't know what you think. You keep it carefully to yourself."

"I supposed I was expected to. I have n't annoyed you with reticence on any other subject, have I?" Honoria laughed.

"On only one other," she said.

"Well, that 's only fair. But sit down here, Nora, my unknown philanthropist, my mysterious friend. Do you know, I always suspected you were not endowed with that which is said to be only skin deep, you kept your face so carefully hidden in that hideous old bonnet. I'm everlastingly glad it 's lost. The glimpses I had were alluring, but lots of ugly women are good-looking in the dark. I see I was mistaken, though."

"Don't talk to me in that way. It's altogether too fresh,—intimate, I mean. You never did it before."

"You said you trusted me."

"I know I did."

"Well, don't you now?"

"Ye—es."

"Then, don't you like it, to be talked to in

that way?" Honoria hesitated, then answered bravely :

"Yes, I do." Hugo's face lit up and he laughed with pleasure.

"Then, why should n't I? Now, my dear girl, you know we can't be strictly impersonal any longer; it's a moral impossibility. We did n't manage it very well last night. Come, let's be happy this glorious sunshiny Sunday morning, and forget that there is any future or any past. What difference if we don't know the combination of letters that spells each other's name; we do know and trust each other's real selves." He held out his hand to her.

"Very well, if you will confine yourself to the purely platonic," she answered, putting her hand in his.

"I suppose I've got to," he said resignedly. "Do you know, I was just thinking a little thought or two about you as I lay here, but I am not going to tell you what they were. I have been to this spot a number of times before, but only on one occasion did I ever meet any one. I suppose I must n't ask you how you got in?"

“Nor I you!” she answered. “I will tell you a secret,” she went on. Hugo raised himself eagerly on one elbow; for he had stretched himself out on the rock again, with Sunny on top of him. Honoria lowered her voice to an impressive whisper as she said:

“I am a fairy,” and then she laughed at the look of disappointment that showed itself in his face.

“I think you are a witch, or a hobgoblin, nothing half so harmless as a fairy. Which are you,—the queen?” Honoria only just checked a start as she realized what he meant.

“Yes, I am the queen. Is there anything I can do for you, poor mortal?”

“Yes; any quantity. I am afraid, though, they would n’t come under the heading of our agreement.”

“What book have you there?” she asked, pointedly changing the subject.

“Can’t Your Majesty divine that?” he asked. A curious look came over Honoria’s face.

“It is—I can’t be mistaken—I really believe it is the *Morte d’Arthur*.”

“Ah, you saw the title.”

“You would n’t believe me if I said I did n’t,

so I won't put your politeness to the test," she answered. "You are fond of old Mallory?"

"I have n't owned a copy for years. I was devoted to it when I was a boy, and I saw this in a bookstore yesterday and bought it for old association's sake. The funny part of it is that it is intimately connected with my other adventure on this spot, which I spoke about a minute ago. Would you like to hear about it? It is very interesting; lots more so than my stories about drains and politics which you are so fond of listening to."

"I should like to hear it," she answered, with a curious smile.

"Well, the last time I was in this fine country of yours was ten or twelve years ago. I am sorry to have to bestow this information on you gratuitously, but it comes with the story. My sister had died a short time before, and I was feeling very much cut up. She was several years older than I, but we had always been chums. We had even had the same tutors, and I missed her horribly. Well, one day,—it was in the spring, too—I came out here to be miserable, and took *Morte d'Arthur* as a pretext. I was lying here on this very rock when

I heard a whistle, and, looking up, I saw a little girl standing just where you stood. It was a very pretty little girl, beautifully dressed, and she had a little gold whistle in her hand. She asked me if I had seen her dog, a big stag hound ; and her manner was simple and natural, but not in the least shy. I offered to help her look for him ; but she thought she would sit down and wait and see if he did n't find her. She was tired of looking. I helped her up on the rock, just as I did you, and we began to talk. Are you listening? Does this bore you?" he broke off abruptly ; for Honoria was looking off in the distance, an absent-minded expression on her face.

"Bore me? I should say not. I am intensely interested. Go on, Hugo. What did you talk about?"

"Dogs first, and then about my book. And I told her some of the story and read her bits (suited to her age), and she became so interested in it that she said she should get her governess to buy the book for her. I expressed my doubts as to her being willing she should read it, but she said she let her read anything she wanted to, almost. And she cried a lot when

I read her about Launcelot's death,—quite unaffectedly and without the slightest attempt at hiding it. She even borrowed a handkerchief of me when her own was used up."

"How old was she, and did she tell you her name?" Honoria asked.

"I should guess she was about twelve from her looks, but she was very old for her age. She wouldn't tell me her name nor how she got into the park. Well, she stayed with me nearly all day, and I almost forgot my unhappiness, for the first time. At last, however, she asked me why I was in mourning, and I told her all about Helena, and showed her the watch she had had made for my sixteenth birthday, and she was wonderfully sympathetic for a child, and kept begging me to tell her more. I never understood why I did it, for I could n't bear to have even my father speak of her to me. I had brought some sandwiches out with me for lunch, and I divided them with her and her dog, who succeeded in finding us. It was late in the afternoon before she went, and she insisted on giving me this little gold whistle to remember her by. See here."

"Yes; I noticed it the first night we met. I

suppose your telling her about your sister was just another instance of what we were speaking of the other night, our bursts of confidence to strangers, don't you remember? Is there any more?"

"Yes ; the most thrilling part is yet to come. I gave her my *Morte d'Arthur*. It was the same edition and binding as this one, and Helena had given it to me ; but she had given me so many things, and I knew she would have liked me to give it to this little girl who took such an interest in her. It had *Hugo from Helena* on the title page. Well, I went home and showed the whistle to my father and told him about it, and he discovered the royal arms on it,—see here—and was surprised and ashamed at my not knowing them. He knew the little Princess Honoria was staying at the convent, and guessed that she was my little friend ; and, sure enough, it was. My father found out through Father Lalande that she had run away for the day, and that they had been in the greatest state of excitement about it. Now was n't that a romantic adventure to happen on the very spot where you are sitting?"



"I should say so. And you have never seen or heard from her since?"

"Never. You see she didn't know who I was; and, someway, I have never cared to see her. I prefer to remember her as she was that day; and it is hard for me even now to believe the things I hear about her. I hear that Baron Hausman reports that she refuses to take the slightest interest in the people and their troubles, and insists on spending those enormous sums of money on entertainments and royal caprices. A committee of workingmen called on him to remonstrate on the expenditure, thinking he was at the bottom of it, and that was what he said. Of course, it may not be true; he is such an infernal old liar."

"When was this?" Honoria asked, with difficulty suppressing her indignation.

"Yesterday or day before. I heard it only this morning. But I do not see how my sympathetic little friend could have changed so," he continued. "Anyway, I doubt if she has ever thought of our adventure again."

"I don't believe that and neither do you," said Honoria. "Just think what a life she must have led, walled around with etiquette, and

never allowed to talk to any one within a mile of her own age alone, much less a strange boy."

"If she was n't, she took to it naturally," Hugo put in. Honoria took no notice of his remark, but went on:

"I am sure it was the event of her life, and I have no doubt she thought of you and longed to see you and dreamed of you for many years afterwards; and that the *Morte d'Arthur* was her most precious treasure. Poor little girl! It must be so lonely to be the heir to a throne, so far up and away from people and human interests and all that makes life worth having. Besides, I should n't wonder, indeed, I am sure you must have been rather a good-looking boy, Hugo. Weren't you?" Hugo tried to blush and look bashful as he answered, coughing and turning away his head in mock modesty:

"I believe I was considered—not bad looking." Honoria laughed.

"How coy he is! And how about now? Do you think you are not bad looking now?"

"What *I* think is not of the slightest consequence," he replied significantly, dropping his shyness.

"Did n't you suspect her of being of high rank?" she asked quickly.

"After I knew who she was, I did. Then I remembered certain little imperious gestures and things of that sort,—no more than you have, though. I never saw anything in royalty more imperious than the look you gave me last night when I said something you said was utter nonsense. I shall never forget my day with my sovereign, though," he added.

"A very pretty little story," Honoria went on. "Here, read some to me, too, what you read to the Queen, for instance, only it need n't be suited to my age. I am going to lean back here against this rock, but don't think I am not listening if I shut my eyes. I am very tired."

"Our night tramps have been too much for you, I am afraid," Hugo said affectionately, making a pillow for her out of his coat which was lying beside him. He was not in strict workingman's clothes to-day, but in a *negligé* costume that would have suited almost any station. "Here, lean back and don't talk, and I will read to you."

He read for over an hour, a chapter here and a chapter there. Honoria had said she

liked the parts about Guinever and Launcelot best, so he read her of how she was jealous of Elaine, and of how she fled to the convent at Almesbury, and how Launcelot parted from her with the words: "For I take record of God ; in you I have had my earthly joy." And of her death, and finally of Launcelot's. And when he had read the words Sir Ector spoke over his dead body—"Thou, Sir Launcelot, there thou liest, that thou were never matched of earthly knight's hand ; and thou were the courtiest knight that ever bare shield ; and thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse ; and thou were the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman ; and thou were the kindest man that ever strake with sword ; and thou were the goodliest person ever came among press of knights ; and thou was the meekest man and the gentlest that ever eat in hall among ladies ; and thou were the sternest man to thy mortal foes that ever put spear in rest." He closed the book and looked at Honoria to find the tears streaming down her face. She did not seem to be at all ashamed of them.

"I am as bad as your little queen," she

sobbed. Hugo took one of her hands in both his.

"I wish I had n't promised," he said. "Did you ever read this before?"

"Oh, yes! But not for a long while. It always makes me cry; it is the saddest, sweetest love story that was ever written. Mallory does n't tell the most pathetic part, though. I mean where Launcelot brings Guinever the seven diamonds he has spent seven years winning for her in the seven big tournaments, and she drops them out of the castle window into the lake because she is jealous of Elaine. It is natural and like the passionate woman she is, but it does seem such a needless waste,—I don't mean so much of the diamonds as of Launcelot's devotion. It always makes me feel so badly. Poor Launcelot! 'the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman!'"

"That was Tennyson's version, was n't it?" Hugo asked. "How one longs to put that prig of an Arthur out of the way!" he continued. "He was always *de trop*."

"Do you suppose they would have loved each other so much if they could have done

it before all the world?" Honoria said. Hugo shook his head.

"I should like to believe so, but I am afraid not."

"You skeptical person," remonstrated Honoria, still wiping her eyes. "I don't agree with you at all. I am sure such love as they felt for each other is immortal and unchangeable. Just think how honorable Launcelot was, and of what a love it must have been that made him disloyal to Arthur, his friend, who trusted him above all the Knights of the Round Table."

"Well, perhaps I was posing," Hugo admitted frankly, "for in the bottom of my heart, after you get through the layers of wordly wisdom, I do believe in such things."

"Such things are very nice," Honoria said, pointedly. Hugo's face lit up. He sat up again. "And so would be something to eat," she went on prudently. "I don't know about you, Hugo; but I am starved, and I don't suppose there is a thing to eat, except toad-stools, in all this park." Hugo rose to his feet, saying:

"I know where a bread-fruit tree grows, and

I am going to gather some. You stay with your missus, Sunny, 'precious lambkin.'" He was gone before Honoria could do more than fling a dry twig at him, and grab Sunny, who seemed inclined to follow in spite of the prohibition.

In about fifteen minutes he came back, a basket on his arm and her sunbonnet in his hand.

"Well, fairy godmother, I have outdone you in your own line. I have conjured up your sunbonnet out of a clump of blue flowers; and what do you think of this?" He took the napkin off the top of the basket and disclosed a cold chicken, some bread and butter, big red strawberries and a bottle of wine covered with cobwebs. "Here, Sunny, you young anaconda, you are not invited to partake yet a while. You belong to the second table. Your missus will have to hold you while I serve the repast."

"I suppose I must n't ask where you got these attractive looking supplies," Honoria remarked, trying to restrain Sunny, who was one ecstatic wiggle, to her lap.

"I don't make unnecessary mysteries," Hugo

said piously. "The old woman in charge at the castle is an old friend of mine, and this is n't the first time that she has shown me favor. See, the forks have the Waldeck crest on them."

"The same that is on your watch," Honoria said, with assumed carelessness, not looking at her companion.

"I told Mrs. Banner I had a friend with me to whom I should like to show the castle, and she said to bring you along," he went on, without noticing her remark. "Should you like to see it?"

"Indeed, I should. I have always heard that it was beautiful, but that it was almost impossible to get permission. I don't know that I had better go, though," she broke off. Hugo laughed.

"I suppose you are thinking of *les conventions*; but I am afraid it is rather late in the day to consider those. Besides, you won't see a soul except Mrs. Banner. One of the keepers sleeps there at night, but she is all alone in the daytime; and she is the dearest, most benevolent old soul. She has a very exalted opinion of me, poor woman; and accepts anything I do



as the only possible and the best possible thing to do. If you were in ballet costume instead of these most respectable garments, her only thought would be of how good it would be for you to have such a virtuous companion. Poor woman, she has seen some such questionable proceedings at the castle in the old days that any man who prefers to lead a decent life is an angel from heaven to her. You 'd better come."

"All right, I will. How good this bread and butter is! I am so glad that I came into the park to-day and that I met you!"

"So am I," Hugo declared emphatically, "and so is Sunny. You like chicken bones, don't you, 'darlin' Sunnykins'?"

"If you don't stop making fun of me, I'll do something undignified," Honoria threatened.

"I wish you would!"

"Well, I won't then. You're the queerest boy, Hugo, do you know it?"

"Boy! I like that! I'm nearly twenty-eight."

"I don't care if you're fifty-eight."

"I'm several years older than you."

"Are you? How do you know so much? I

don't remember telling you anything about my age."

"How old are you? Ah, come now, Nora Creina, tell me."

"Indeed, I won't do any such thing. Besides, you should n't interrupt me. I was going to say that you were the queerest combination. I should n't think that the you that lectures to the workingmen and escorts strange women through the streets at night would have a speaking acquaintance with the impudent you that picnics in parks,—likewise with strange women."

"And I suppose there is no difference between the demure little hypocritical you that pretends to take such a vital interest in taxes and drains and wages and the bold, designing you that does her best to make strange men as unhappy as they can be?"

"Hugo! I am going home."

"I take it back! I did n't mean it! It's your misfortune not your fault."

"If I thought you really meant what you said," Honoria began.

"Oh, I don't. I don't mean anything that could take you away from me. Come, let us go up to the castle. Mrs. Banner will be ex-

pecting us, and will have put her second best black silk on, and we can't let her go to that expense for nothing. Here, let me help you up."

"What a beautiful old park this is!" Honoria exclaimed, as they walked slowly over the grass under the trees. It was getting late in the afternoon, and the sun's rays came slanting through the foliage, not yet thick enough to keep them out.

"It *is* rather nice," Hugo replied.

"Don't you wish you owned it?" she asked, with a smile.

"Indeed I do," he answered fervently.

"I think Count Waldeck must be very pig-gish," she went on. "The idea of keeping a huge piece of ground like this, right on the edge of the city, for the use of one person who is never here! If you ever meet him, I wish you would tell him so with my compliments."

"With whose compliments did you say?" he asked significantly.

"Nora Creina's," she answered demurely, "Don't you think yourself it is very selfish?"

"I should say I did; and if I ever meet Count Waldeck face to face, I will tell him so.

I will open his eyes to his duty. I have no doubt he is making weak excuses to himself about the length of time it has been in the family, and whether he does n't owe it to future Waldecks, and the possible misuse that any trustees or public officials might make of it. Why, they might cut down the trees and run up blocks of tenements, and it is almost hopeless trying to impose conditions that cannot be got around."

"Oh, I did n't mean to give it, only lend it," said Honoria, trying not to laugh.

"But that would n't secure it to the people for ever; and it would be dreadful for them to have to give it up after they had once had it. No, I think he ought to give it, and I'd like to help him make up his mind to do it."

"Of course the people would enjoy the freedom and the space, and all that sort of thing," she went on, changing her tack, "but how little appreciation they would have of the exquisiteness of it all. Do you think they would even see the grey lichens on that oak tree over there?"

"I don't agree with you," said Hugo. "I think that ignorant people often have a great

appreciation of certain kinds of natural beauty, of the woodsy kind especially ; or why else do they flock to every bit of wood around a city, and spoil it with their eggshells and beer bottles? They always choose the prettiest spot, too. And children—I can remember how I loved a brook and ferns and trees before I had the slightest recognition of the beauty of a mountain or a moor, or of a picture either. All the same, I don't wonder Count Waldeck finds it hard to give this up. I should if I were he."

"Well, don't forget my message to him," Honoria added, longing to ask him if he knew him, but feeling that it would n't be fair. So it was he that asked her instead :

"Did you ever meet him?"

"Yes ; I met him years ago."

"You did? When was that? Tell me about it."

"No ; I don't think I will."

"And you won't tell me about the first time you met me either, you provoking Sphinx."

"If my language were not always of the properest, I should say 'do let up on that,'" she answered.

The castle was magnificent—of a magnificence

that dated back several hundred years. It had been disused for a long time, the late Count Waldeck having taken a dislike to the place and bringing up his family in foreign lands; but everything was kept in perfect repair.

“To think that I might have missed this!” Honoria exclaimed, as she walked through the quaint old apartments with Hugo and Mrs. Banner.

“Now show the young lady the picture gallery, Mrs. Banner, while I look up something I want to find out here,” said Hugo, when they had inspected all the principal rooms, and were just leaving the library.

The pictures were chiefly family portraits. Honoria looked at them without much interest, hardly listening to the housekeeper’s stories, until they came to the portrait of a singularly handsome man in more modern clothing, evidently by a master hand.

“Who is that?” she asked abruptly, cutting short the old woman’s narrative.

“That is the late Count Waldeck, the present Count’s father,” she replied. Honoria fancied she looked confused.

“It is the perfect image of Mr. Hiller,” she

said, calling him by the only name she knew. The next second she would have given anything not to have spoken. It seemed like trying to find out her friend's secrets, which she would not have cared to do, even if he had not been so chivalrous about her own. Mrs. Banner hesitated for a minute, and then replied in a half whisper :

"It is not strange. They say he is not so distantly related to the late Count, who was a gay young gentleman in his youth. Poor young gentleman! It is nothing to his discredit, though many folks would take it to be so."

"No, of course not," Honoria assented, very much surprised at what she had learned ; for she had jumped at the conclusion that her mysterious friend was Count Waldeck himself. And now she smiled at the vividness of her imagination that had made her see confirmation of her suspicions in his manner when he talked about giving the Count his opinion about the park. Probably, he had only been a little conscious of the relationship. Still, this explanation gave the key to much that had been incomprehensible. It was not strange that he

had taken up with the working classes. A great pity came over her as she thought of his position. She remembered now that he had several times spoken of "the name I bear" and not "my name," as would have been natural. Did he, she wondered, bear that of Waldeck?

She had only a moment to think of her discovery before Hugo himself joined them, and they started to walk through the park together to the seven beeches, where she had stipulated he should leave her. The new-born pity she felt for him made her kinder and more accessible than ever before. As they parted, she agreed to make one more expedition with him the next night to a political meeting.



## CHAPTER V.

### A NARROW ESCAPE.

“WELL, my mysterious friend, the woman in the blue sunbonnet, how do you feel to-day after the dissipation of yesterday?” It was the next night, and Honoria had just joined Hugo in front of the North Gate.

“Very well, I thank you, sir. What are you going to do with me to-night?”

“I am going to prove to you how completely I trust you by taking you to a secret session of a political club to which I belong,—a very different thing from the meetings you have been to before. I suppose I ought not to, knowing nothing of your antecedents; but I never can help acting on my own beliefs. I asked permission to bring a safe friend. There will be one or two other women there.”

“I will tell you one thing, Hugo, and I want

you to remember it. No matter who or what I am, nothing I learn shall ever be turned to the people's disadvantage. My one desire is their welfare." She said this with a truly queenly air. She had almost said "my people."

"I knew that without your telling me," he answered, leading the way down a narrow alley that opened on the side street on which they had been walking. Out of this was a court, dark and ill-smelling. Hugo knocked four times at a door at the bottom of this, and when it was opened a crack, said something in too low a voice for Honoria to catch his words. The door was opened enough to admit them. It was so dark inside that she saw no one, only heard steps on the loose boards in front of them. Hugo turned and took her hand and led her down a long passage, with the manner of one familiar with the place. His strong, warm clasp was very reassuring. He opened a door at the rear and led her into a room half full of people,—for the most part men. The air was warm and close, the odors of our masters, the great unwashed, mingling with bad tobacco and stale onions. Honoria felt a little faint, and whispered a request to Hugo to sit by the window.

The business of the evening had begun ; and a short, slight man, with a lame leg, was holding forth on the subject of their political grievances. The substance was much the same as she had heard at the open meetings, but the manner was different, more impassioned, and the charges more specific. The threats used were definite instead of vague, and hints were given of a resort to arms if milder measures were not successful in bringing about a better condition of affairs. All eyes had been turned on Hugo from the moment he entered the room ; and when the lame man sat down, shouts of "Hiller" arose. He got up and said that he preferred to speak later if they did not mind. He wanted to hear what the others had to say first. It was a strange experience for Honoria. He seemed to have gone back from her friend Hugo of the past week into the Hiller of her earlier acquaintance. It seemed as if they must be two people. She could hardly believe that this was the man she had been so intimate with the day before, who had teased her about the nonsense she talked to Sunny and made affectionate fun of her in various ways.

There were many speakers, all of them vehe

ment and excited, but Honoria paid slight attention, though they were talking of that which she was most desirous to learn, until Hugo rose to his feet. She felt a vague, though acute, jealousy of the close attention they paid him, and also of the deep interest he seemed to take in the evening's proceedings. He had so much in life that was not hers. He began by saying that they knew he was not entirely in sympathy with them; they had known it when they admitted him to their club. Under no circumstances did he believe in violence. If the people were only determined and united, they could get anything that was reasonable by peaceful means. They, the members of the club, were men of thought and reason, but did they think it safe to rouse unthinking animals like the mass of the people? Then he spoke of the French Revolution, and gave some details of the misuse of power and the dangers of a popular uprising that made Honoria shiver. The audience listened while he spoke, evidently convinced against their will. She felt instinctively that this conviction was only temporary. They would swing back to their original one as soon as they were out from under the influence

of his personal magnetism. There was something inspiring in his noble, clear-cut features, his smile that was not confined to his mouth, the lighting up of his eyes, his clear, resonant voice, and eager, impulsive manner. Honoria felt for the moment that he could make her believe anything on this earth, persuade her to any conceivable step ; and something inside her seemed to drop as she thought that to-night was, in all human probability, the last time she should come under the influence of his charm. To-morrow she would go back to the Palace and take up the irksome round of court etiquette, which she had been so glad to get away from while having no suspicion of the miracle that was to take place in a short fortnight's absence. Baron Hausman refused to be put off any longer.

It was getting very late, but Hugo was still speaking to an enraptured audience when a noise was heard in the passage outside,—a commotion, the clanking of arms, and the sound of heavy boots. All rose to their feet in alarm. Hugo stopped and turned his head as the door opened and three or four soldiers, headed by a corporal, marched into the room. The men

started to get out of the window. The soldiers would have stopped them, but their chief called out to let them go.

“They won’t go off without any gunpowder, and that I have here,” he said contemptuously, laying his hand on Hugo’s shoulder. “Where is the woman?” he added quickly; and seeing Honoria sitting motionless in her corner, he signed to two of his men to take up their stand by her. It was hardly a minute before the room was empty of all except Hugo and Honoria and the five soldiers.

“What does this mean?” Hugo demanded angrily of the Corporal.

“It means that the authorities have had enough of your nonsense. I have a warrant from the Governor of the Citadel for your arrest, and that of the woman who has been seen with you so often lately. You can see it if you don’t believe me.” Hugo motioned the paper impatiently away.

“What has she to do with it? Arrest me, if you like, but do not make an innocent woman suffer. I suppose the technical term for the charge is treason, and I swear to you that she has had nothing to do with any of the

proceedings that you choose to call by that name."

"Who is she then, and what is she doing at these meetings?" asked the man. Hugo was silent.

"You might ask her," suggested one of the soldiers. The Corporal turned to Honoria.

"Give an account of yourself, woman. What is your name, and who are you?" Hugo looked at her imploringly, but Honoria neither met his eyes nor answered.

"I see," the man said quietly. "I arrest you, woman, in the name of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, for plotting against her royal person and power." Honoria rose to her feet and walked over to Hugo, attended by the two soldiers.

"Don't look so anxious," she said, smiling. "Let us go with these men now. I am not in the least afraid. Nobody who heard you speak this evening could doubt your innocence, and I—there is no one in Her Majesty's kingdom less likely to be guilty of that charge than I. Will you take us where you wish us to go, Corporal." The man was evidently impressed by her words and manner.

“I am sure I hope it is a mistake, ma’am,” he said politely.

“Informers are often mistaken,” she returned coldly.

“I was told that Baron Hausman himself made the charge and asked the Governor to order the arrest,” the man continued.

“Baron Hausman is not infallible. May I trouble you to ask your men not to walk quite so close to me. I give you my word of honor I shall make no attempt to escape.”

It was not a long walk to the Citadel, and the lateness of the hour prevented their being the object of much notice, for which Honoria was very thankful. Another circumstance to be grateful for was that she and Hugo were left alone in the same room, a small apartment with barred window, a grating in the door, and a table and a chair for furniture. Hugo had not spoken during their rapid walk, but kept his eyes cast down on the ground. He took no notice of Honoria’s words when she said lightly :

“How foolish of them to leave two conspirators alone together ! They ought to have shut us up in separate cells.”

“I shall never forgive myself for getting you



into this scrape," he broke out vehemently. "I ought never to have taken you to that accursed meeting. I knew it all the time, but I had to go myself and I wanted you. I should n't blame you if you never forgave me either." Honoria went up to him as he sat on a corner of the table, put her hand on his shoulder and said:

"My dear Hugo, don't mind on my account. I am not in the slightest danger. I assure you I can get out any moment I choose. I prefer to stay with you, though."

"Yes, but you cannot without some sacrifice, without telling that which you do not want to tell, without your—acquaintance with me being known. Is n't that so?" Honoria did not answer, but she still kept her hand on his shoulder. Hugo bent his head until his lips rested on it.

"I knew it. But you need n't do anything you don't want to. I swear I will get you out the first thing in the morning, and that nobody shall know anything more about you."

"It is a slight comfort that we are together," Honoria said affectionately.

"If I had n't got you into it," he replied.

Steps were heard coming down the corridor Honoria removed her hand and sat down in the chair. The key was turned in the lock and the Corporal entered.

"The lady is to come with me. Don't be frightened, ma'am. I am only going to take you to a more comfortable place."

"Is there no help for it?" she asked.

"No, ma'am," replied the man. "It is the Governor's own orders."

"Then leave us for a minute alone," Hugo interposed. "We can plan nothing desperate in an extra minute." The soldier hesitated, but Hugo's tone was so imperative that he obeyed in spite of himself, and moved a little way down the hall, leaving the door ajar. Hugo held out his arms to Honoria.

"Just this once to show me you forgive me," he pleaded in a whisper. She threw herself into them. He pushed her sunbonnet back, took a long look into her eyes, then kissed her passionately several times, releasing her as the man was heard returning.

"Good-by, my Nora Creina," he said, in a voice full of repressed feeling. Honoria was crying, but she hastily pulled her sunbonnet

over her face and followed the Corporal without another look or word.

That night was the happiest she had ever spent,—lying on the little hard bed in the corner of the room to which the Corporal had conducted her. She tried to make herself remember that she was in prison. What did it matter? Hugo had said he would get her out in the morning. She told herself that this was the beginning of the end; that after to-morrow she would never see him again, but she did not believe it. Fate had thrown them together, and she was sure it was not to no purpose. It could not be pure blind chance that had arranged their two meetings. There might be a revolution; she might be deposed; anything might happen. At all events, for this one night it was enough to know that they loved one another. Finally, she fell asleep and slept as quietly and peacefully as in her little bed at the convent. It was hardly light when she was awakened by a knock at her door. She put on her sunbonnet and called, "Come in." The Corporal entered, and said in a most deferential manner:

"It's all a mistake, please, ma'am. The

Governor says you are to go, and the gentleman is waiting for you outside. Of course, you understand, ma'am, that I was only doing my duty."

"I understand, Corporal, only next time do it a little more politely. Show me the way, please."

Hugo was standing at the gate of the Citadel and they went out, unchallenged by the sentry.

"I suppose you won't tell me how you managed it," said Honoria, when they were in the open street.

"No; that is my secret. It was n't hard. What sort of a night did you have, my poor girl?"

"You need n't pity me. I slept beautifully, and had the most heavenly dreams."

"You are the pluckiest woman I ever came across, my Nora Creina. I shall never forget my feeling on seeing you plunge into that mass of growling, snapping dogs; and last night, and on a dozen occasions. Nothing seems to frighten you." Honoria laughed with pleasure at his words and the approbation in his voice as she said:

"I could never see why it was n't a woman's

duty to be brave as well as a man's. I never could see the supposed attractiveness of timidity in women."

"Nor I," assented Hugo. They walked in silence for a few minutes, and then Honoria spoke:

"Hugo, do you realize that we have only three squares more to the North Gate, and that this is the beginning of the end?" The laughter had all gone out of her voice.

"Do you mean it—now?" he asked, soberly.

"Yes; now more than ever. We can't meet as simple friends, even if it were practicable to do so; so we can't meet at all."

It was early, only just dawn. An occasional sunbeam was touching the chimney tops, but the streets, deserted except for themselves, were in shadow. Hugo took both her hands in his.

"Nora," he said, impressively, "I have never asked you a personal question, but you must answer me now. Is there another man between us? Was I taking any other man's rights last night?" Honoria looked him straight in the eyes.

“Before God—no, Hugo. No man ever kissed me in my life till last night.”

“Then why—” Hugo was beginning passionately, but Honoria stopped him.

“It is none the less impossible, and I assure you that it is an impossibility you yourself would be the first to recognize if you knew the circumstances.” He dropped her hands and they walked along in silence till they came to the North Gate, which was now all in sunshine except a little cold strip at the bottom where they stood.

“Will you say good-by to me, Hugo? I cannot stay any longer!” Her voice was full of tears. He raised his eyes and said quietly, but with a purpose that made Honoria’s heart beat faster with hope:

“Do not delude yourself into thinking this is the last of me. You have sworn no man is between us, and there is no other obstacle I cannot triumph over. Remember that it is only ‘till I see you again’ that I mean. Good-by, my darling.” He took her in his arms once more and kissed her. The next minute he was alone in the shadow of the tall gate.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A ROYAL AUDIENCE.

THAT same morning, after taking a regretful leave of the Mother Superior, the Sisters, and the pupils, with all of whom her relations had been of the pleasantest, Queen Honoria went back to the Palace, greatly to Nanon's relief. The latter had not found her stay at the convent so enjoyable as she had expected to. Her young mistress had been absent-minded and not at all companionable, and her frequent and prolonged absences were a source of anxiety; for Nanon had a firm belief that the responsibility of the kingdom in general and the Queen in particular rested on her old shoulders.

"I shall be glad to have Your Majesty safe back at the Palace," she began severely, when the carriage was rolling through the streets. The Queen had been staring out the window,

recognizing various spots and losing herself in the memories they severally called up, but she turned her head as Nanon spoke. Nanon never stood on ceremony in regard to waiting until she was spoken to.

“Poor old Nanon! I am a terrible anxiety to you, and I am afraid I always shall be. You and I were never made to understand each other, and it is a strange chance that has made us pass our lives together.” Nanon melted, as she always did, at the slightest concession on the part of her royal mistress. Usually her grievances were met with good-natured ridicule.

“I should n’t be that presumptuous, Madam; and I once gave that airy Mlle. von Ettersberg a piece of my mind when she declared she could read you like a book. I told her I had been with Your Majesty twenty-three years, seven months, and twelve days, and that I should n’t venture to make such a statement.”

“Well, Nanon, some time you shall tell me what you don’t understand about me. I am too tired now to listen.”

“And I should think Your Majesty had a good right to be,” Nanon remarked reprov-  
ingly.



The Queen was met by the news that Baron Hausman had sent to request an audience with Her Majesty as soon as she returned.

“Very well. I will see him directly,” she answered wearily, “and have it over with,” she added to herself. The Baron had a number of reports to make on the condition of affairs, all more or less unfavorable, but glossed over and twisted about, as the Queen now saw, by something that was not the truth. She astonished the Baron by some of her comments: they came too unpleasantly near the facts of the case. When she had signed the papers he had brought her, he asked her if she remembered his speaking to her of a young agitator named Hiller. Her Majesty thought she did, and the Baron went on to say that he had ordered the Governor of the Citadel to have him arrested; but when he went to the Citadel to interview him himself that morning, the Governor had failed to produce him, and had given some flimsy excuse about lack of evidence. He, Hausman, was not a man to stand this, and he had given positive orders that the man was to be re-arrested. The Governor had promised to obey, but had just sent him a message to say that

Hiller had left town for a month. Her Majesty breathed a sigh of relief, which she explained by saying:

"I am very tired now, Baron. Will you kindly leave unimportant matters of this nature until next time."

"Your Majesty does not look so refreshed as I expected to find her after her fortnight's seclusion," said the Baron.

"I did n't sleep last night,—that is all. I assure you it has done me a world of good."

The Queen did not know what to do in regard to Hiller. She could not give positive orders that he was not to be arrested unless she gave some good and sufficient reason. Still, a month was a long time; anything might happen in it; she would not worry so far ahead. It was a relief to know that Hugo was away and in safety. Besides the temptation to defy all risks and go to him would not be so great as when she knew where he was to be found. He had spoken of going away for a little, but in such a vague way that she had not supposed he meant immediately.

That afternoon Her Majesty gave orders that she was not to be disturbed. No sooner was

she alone than she went to her private bookcase and took down a book, worn with much reading. She turned to the title page and read again and again some words written there, passing her finger over each individual letter. Then she put the book under her cheek for a pillow, and went to sleep there in front of the window looking out on the royal park. It was late when she awoke, and one of her ladies in waiting was standing beside her to tell her that it was time to dress for dinner and the magnificent court ball that was to follow.

Her Majesty had never looked or appeared better, they said, than she did that evening in her satin gown with its blaze of diamonds. She was very gracious and kindly—more so than she was accustomed to be. The courtiers noticed that she was particularly cordial to the Governor of the Citadel, who was relieved to find that Hausman's displeasure did not include that of his royal mistress.

One morning, three weeks later, the Queen was coming in from a walk in the park, accompanied by two of her ladies and Sunny, when she was met by Baron Hausman himself, who demanded an interview.

"I will not keep Your Majesty but a minute or two," he explained. So she led the way into a small reception-room near at hand.

"Now what is it, Baron?" she asked, not at all prepared for the bombshell that followed.

"Hiller is arrested," he said, abruptly. "I did n't trust the Governor, as I saw he had some private reason for not doing it, so I put men of my own on the track. He is in the Citadel now, and I have just been interviewing him. He positively denies any implication in a conspiracy, as he naturally would do."

"Well, what are you going to do with him, now you have him?" asked the Queen, recovering her composure. The Baron coughed and cleared his throat several times before he answered:

"I thought if Your Majesty would deign to see him."

"I see him? What earthly good would that do?"

"I could n't exactly offer the fellow money; there was something about him that prevented me from doing it; but I thought—I thought if Your Majesty would talk to him and be kind and gracious to him, as no one knows how to do

so well as Your Majesty, he might be induced to think that queens were not such a bad institution after all."

"Ah, I see," said Her Majesty, slowly. "Myself the woman is to do a little business for myself the Queen! I do not know that I should care to do that, Baron. I will see this man, however, if you wish, if I can see him absolutely alone."

"That is, of course, as Your Majesty chooses," replied the Baron, greatly pleased, and thinking he had, for once, gained his point. "I will go and bring him here in my carriage immediately—if Your Majesty is willing to receive him now."

"Very well. I shall be ready to receive him in half an hour. In the throne room, Baron, and remember, no one is to come in with him. I have a little plan of my own. Give me fifteen minutes before you join us."

The Queen smiled sadly to herself as she went upstairs, thinking :

"Baron Hausman thinks he has found out a feminine weakness in me; but what do I care? I am going to see him—to see him." Sunny came jumping to meet her, and she caught him

up in her arms and gave him a hug while she whispered the great news to him.

Queen Honoria was standing at one end of the throne room in the most beautiful every-day attire that even a queen can wear. A throne-like chair was waiting for her on a dais. To look at her air of calm stateliness, no one would have dreamed how fast her heart was beating underneath that composed and dignified exterior. Presently the portière at the bottom of the room was pushed aside, and a tall figure in workingman's clothes entered. He bowed, but did not raise his head till he was within a few feet of where the Queen was standing. She watched him walk slowly up the room.

"Hugo," she said, quietly. At the sound of her voice he raised his eyes. A flash of incredulous joy lit up his whole face as he exclaimed:

"Nora! Is it really you? I thought I was to see the Queen, but I see only the queen of my heart."

"You are going to see her, but won't you shake hands with Nora first?"

"You are one of her ladies?" Before Honoria could answer, a little white dog rushed into the room and flung himself upon him in a

paroxysm of joy. He was closely followed by a breathless page, who apologized to his mistress :

“Your Majesty must excuse me, but Sunny found this glove and insisted on coming in here. He got away from me.”

“Take him out into the garden, Oscar, and keep him there. Give the gentleman his glove.” Sunny was very reluctant, but Oscar was stronger than he. It was a mystery he never solved to his satisfaction why his old friend and playmate Hugo was so distant to him on this memorable occasion. Even his mistress did not have a word to throw at a dog. Hugo waited until the page had gone, then he said calmly :

“So this is the mystery? I suppose I was very stupid not to guess it. Has Your Majesty any commands for me?”

“Hugo! Don’t speak to me that way,” the Queen implored. “Is my offence unforgivable?”

“There can be no question of forgiveness between the Queen and one of the humblest of her subjects.” Her Majesty stood there blushing and trembling like an every-day girl while Hugo stood calmly before her, waiting for his dismissal.

"Hugo," she said at length, "do you, is it possible you think I would betray anything I learned through you? If I knew I were to be deposed to-morrow, I should not take one step to prevent it so long as it was through you I heard it." Hugo hesitated, then said, frankly :

"I only wish I could believe it. No, my Queen, I have no quarrel with Your Majesty." He laid an almost imperceptible emphasis on the last two words.

"But you have with Nora," said the Queen, half to herself. At this moment the Baron entered the room.

"Well, Your Majesty," he began, cheerfully, "has Your Majesty succeeded in persuading this young agitator that we are not so black as we are painted?"

"I have not tried to, my Lord," the Queen answered shortly, while Hugo said :

"I told your Lordship before, and I will repeat it in the presence of Her Majesty, that I am one of the most loyal of Her Majesty's subjects. All I wish to do is to help the people to a little better way of living, to awake them from their indifference to a rational, healthy interest in politics. I steadily use my influence



against all changes that are not to be brought about in accordance with the law and custom of the land. I am not afraid to say, even here, that there are tremendous abuses, great oppression, that I should like to see put right, but not by revolutionary methods. That, Your Majesty, is my political code."

"I see you are a very determined young man," said the Baron, patronizingly. "I think we shall have to send you back to the Citadel for the night, at all events, and then we shall see—we shall see. Does this plan meet with Your Majesty's approval?"

"I see no reason why Mr. Hiller should not be set at liberty immediately, Baron Hausman. I see nothing in his political code that menaces the state. I am sure we ourselves would be very glad to see abuses rectified in a rational manner."

"If Your Majesty will excuse me, I should prefer to let his Lordship have time to fully investigate the charges against me, so that when he sets me free, I may be certain that I shall not be deprived of my liberty again."

"As you please, Mr. Hiller," the Queen replied coldly, dismissing her companions with a gesture.

The Governor of the Citadel was more impressed than ever with the Queen's cordiality that evening at the state reception held at the Palace. It was doubly welcome to him, for he had a communication to make to her and a favor to ask. He requested a few minutes' audience on a private matter that needed immediate attention.

"You can speak to me here, Your Excellency," said Her Majesty, stationing one of her pages to see that they were not interrupted.

"I have been trying to make up my mind whether it was best to tell Your Majesty something," the Governor began, "but Your Majesty's kindness to me has emboldened me to do it. This young Hiller who was brought to the Palace yesterday,—does Your Majesty know who he really is?" The Queen hesitated.

"I have heard he was a son of the late Count Waldeck," she said.

"He was the only son, and is the present Count Waldeck."

"Do you know that positively?" she inquired.

"He told me so himself the first time I had him arrested on Baron Hausman's orders. Of

course I released him—and his companion—immediately.”

“I heard there was something irregular about his birth,” said the Queen.

“Not at all, Your Majesty. His mother was the late Countess Waldeck. I heard that rumor, too, and asked the Count about it. He said he had told the few people who knew his secret to explain away in that manner his likeness to his father in case any one commented on it. It is a most striking resemblance. I knew the late Count, and noticed it myself immediately at a workingmen’s meeting I attended. It was there that I heard this rumor.”

“Then what made him take to his present mode of life?”

“He has always had democratic ideas, he tells me; and after his father’s death, he came back here, intending to try to do something for the people. He was going to lecture and establish clubs and get others interested. But he had no idea they were so ignorant as they are; and he found such an intense hatred of the aristocracy among them that he saw he should have no influence if they knew who he really was. He says he has detested the

disguise, Your Majesty, and that he has many times been on the verge of giving the whole thing up and going back to England, where he has lived most of his life. I think he intends doing it before long, in any case, as he finds he can do nothing for the people."

"My poor people!" exclaimed the Queen.

"What I was going to ask Your Majesty," the Governor went on, "was to see the Count and try to persuade him to remain in the country and to take some position under the government. We need such men as he. He is the cleverest, most reasonable, most honorable man I have ever met. I admired him as Hiller before I knew he was Count Waldeck, and never performed a duty more unwillingly than when I arrested him." A gleam of light came into Her Majesty's eyes, but she said calmly :

"I am willing, Your Excellency; but I should n't want Baron Hausman to know anything about it. Consequently we must keep it from every one else. I should want to see him and talk to him alone. Can you suggest a way? I was afraid we did not treat him so well as we might have done at the audience to-day, Baron

Hausman and myself, but, of course, we did not know his rank. I think you are right. It would be well to conciliate so powerful a man."

"He is the richest of Your Majesty's subjects, and holds the most important of the hereditary offices of state, although neither he nor his father has ever cared to fill them. Could Your Majesty get away unobserved if I should bring him to the summerhouse in an hour's time? I could watch outside."

"No; I would rather take him by surprise. Do you have a carriage at the little side gate at one, and I will come out and go to the Citadel with you. The guests will be leaving then, and it will be a simple matter to slip away. You can manage to have the guards out of the way at the Citadel?"

"Certainly, Your Majesty."

"This is an affair which needs the utmost discretion. It would do me a great deal of injury if any gossip about it got around. My motives would be misinterpreted. I feel, however, that the object to be attained justifies the unconventionality. Can I rely on Your Excellency?"

"To death, Your Majesty."

At quarter past one the Queen was entering the Citadel gate with the Governor. Not a person was in sight.

"Where have you put him?" she asked, as they stepped on the resounding stone floor of the corridor.

"In the last room to the left. I wished to give him better quarters, but for some strange reason, he preferred this room. I sent him word to expect a visitor, so he will still be up. I will bring him to the reception room. This way, please. Your Majesty was never in the Citadel before?"

"Had I not better go to him?" she asked, without taking any notice of his question, which would have been hard to answer truthfully. "There is less chance of my being discovered, and I do not wish him to remember my treatment of him before he sees me."

"But I will not tell him—" the Governor was beginning, but the Queen interrupted him.

"Your Excellency can keep watch here and come for me in ten minutes. I thought I should have more chance of impressing him if I came in my robes of state," and throwing off the long cloak that covered her from head to

foot, Queen Honoria stood there in the narrow stone corridor in the white satin gown and crown jewels that she had worn in her Palace that evening. She left the amazed Governor with her cloak in his hands. He was a simple soul; but there was something he did not understand about this readiness of his sovereign's to fall in with his request. It was not for him to criticise her, or he would have thought another place and hour would have been better. She could not have had any previous acquaintance with Count Waldeck, as she had not recognized him when Baron Hausman took him to the Palace. To be sure, his face and manner were most attractive, but the Queen was not a woman to be influenced by these in one fifteen-minute interview. No; it must really be as she said. She probably had been even less conciliatory to Waldeck than she had admitted to him, and she felt she had made a mistake that she must lose no time in repairing. Perhaps the time and place were chosen to make her concession the greater.

In the meanwhile, Queen Honoria, the object of this musing, swept down the corridor and knocked with beating heart at the door of the

room she had occupied for one short night three weeks before. Was it only that, she wondered. Count Waldeck rose to his feet as this vision of splendor stood before him. He was dressed in gentleman's clothes for the first time in Honoria's acquaintance with him.

"Ah, Your Majesty," he said, "to what am I indebted for this honor?" Honoria went straight up to him.

"Is it any worse for the Queen to masquerade than for Count Waldeck?" she asked.

"No, not in the least," he answered composedly.

"I have only learned to-night who you are," she continued. "I suspected it that day in the park, but afterwards decided I was mistaken. And it seemed to me that you ought not to be so hard on me when you were doing the same thing."

"Your Majesty does not understand. I said I had no quarrel with my Queen."

"What is it, Hugo? Tell me quickly. We have only a few minutes left," she implored with tears in her eyes.

"Your Majesty expected to dazzle me with her splendor," he answered evasively.



“I would gladly have come in my sunbonnet if it had been possible, but the Governor is waiting for me outside ; and since I could not come to you as your friend Nora, I naturally wished you should see me at my best.” As she spoke, she drew herself up to her full height with a look that seemed to say : “Defy me if you like. I know my power.” The light from the lamp fell on her smooth white neck and arms, and on the jewels that shone there and in her hair. Count Waldeck lowered his eyes.

“Your Majesty will excuse me if I turn my eyes away : they are easily blinded,” he said, sarcastically. In a second the Queen was gone and the woman stood in her place.

“Don’t speak to me so, Hugo,” she pleaded. “Tell me, I beg of you, in the name of the day we spent together in the park so many years ago—there is no bitterness in that,—tell me why you hate me so.” This time her words moved him.

“Hate you ! I hate you ! Ah, that is just what I cannot forgive you for. It is Nora I am angry at,—Nora, who has spoiled my life to gratify a caprice. I shall always be filled with insatiable desire and hopeless regrets ; for do

you think I could ever take another woman in my arms after having aspired to my Queen? I have been a happy, satisfied man, as men go, all my life ; but I see nothing before me in the future but loneliness, heart-breaking loneliness, because my Queen chose to descend from her throne and take from me, her subject, my most precious possession, while she knew only too well she could never have any use for it." A light that was not a smile came into Honoria's face.

"Would you give it up, then?" she asked. "Would you give up those evenings we spent together, that day in the park, our night within these walls and the walk home just before dawn? Would you give up having held me in your arms, the kisses I gave you, if you could?" Hugo buried his face in his hands as he answered.

"God help me, no! They are worth it all."

"You know I did not make you love me out of caprice," Honoria went on. "I could not help myself. I was lonely. I have been lonely all my life, with a loneliness you cannot conceive of; and I saw before me the hero of the day-dreams of my childhood and girlhood, only

a thousand times more attractive, more lovable than anything I could imagine. I had never forgotten you. I knew you almost immediately, and that was why I trusted myself to you. I was not so reckless as I seemed. How could I help loving you? And I had never loved any one before, and I did n't know how to keep it to myself. You knew I loved you. It is no use pretending you did n't."

"I have been cursing my vanity for feeling you did; and to-night, when I look at you, it seems more unbelievable than ever. If you were not my Queen, I should still think: 'This glorious woman cares for me! It cannot be.'" The tears in Honoria's eyes were running over now.

"Ah, Hugo," she said, "I love you. Just tell me you love me once more and I will go."

"Hush!" Hugo interrupted. "Some one is coming." The Governor gave a slight knock and opened the door.

"I think Your Majesty had better be going," he said. The Queen was herself again.

"Just one minute more, Your Excellency. Count Waldeck and I are just coming to an

agreement." The Governor withdrew. Honoria held out both her hands.

"I 'm sorry. I could n't help it," she said as if she had been a child caught in some naughtiness. Hugo caught her hands, held them close to him and kissed them passionately.

"If you ever need me, you will find me ready," he said. "Good-by, my Nora Creina." He opened the door for her and closed it behind her when she had passed out.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AT ELMENDORF CASTLE.

THE spring had passed away and the summer was half gone, but the condition of public affairs was outwardly much the same. A careful observer, well-versed in the signs of the times, would have detected a difference, however. There was a bolder note in the papers; the workingmen's meetings were more frequent, and their tone was more outspoken. The Queen looked on anxiously, and kept herself well posted as to what was going on, in spite of Baron Hausman's efforts to keep her in the dark. One bold stand she did make: the court festivities were discontinued.

In August she went with her suite to the castle on the Northern ocean, where she had spent most of her girlhood. It was a great relief to get away from troubles and anxieties

that were too great for her to cope with. Besides, the strict etiquette of the court was always relaxed at Elmendorf. Here she drove, rode, and swam; but her walks in the thick pine forests, alone except for Sunny and two fierce stag-hounds, were her chief pleasure. She was not happy; but she could not be utterly unhappy so long as she and Hugo were alive in the same world and still loved one another. She had not seen him or heard of him directly for the past three months. She knew he had been released from the Citadel and had left the country, but that was all. On her birthday, in the middle of June, one anonymous present had come among the dozens that were sent by fellow-sovereigns and dignitaries. This was a picture of a pile of gray, lichen-covered rocks, with some tall beeches in the background. It was a wonderful piece of work, signed by one of the first painters of the day. Queen Honoria had it hung in her bed-chamber, where she could see it the first thing on waking; and when she went to Elmendorf castle, it went with her.

The little hamlet of Elmendorf boasted of a fine harbor, where vessels of all sorts stopped

for water. It was one of Her Majesty's favorite amusements to drive along the beach and watch the different kinds of craft that were anchored there. The whaling vessels had been her delight when she was a girl, and she had once persuaded Mme. Duvalet to go on board one. She was never tired of watching the deep-sea fishing boats with eyes fresh from *Pêcheur d'Islande*. They stopped at Elmendorf on their way out in June and again on their return in September. Once she had been on board a vessel bound for a three years' stay in the White North ; and passengers and crew, from the famous man of science to the humblest sailor, had tried to outdo one another in the courtesy with which they showed the young princess their devices for securing some degree of comfort in the long, dreary time before them. She had even made friends with the rough sledge dogs. She thought of them often ; and it was with a real pang of sorrow that she learned, several years later, of the fate of the vessel, crushed by huge floes of ice. Only a handful of the men had succeeded in making their way back over the ice to Novaya Zembla, where a whaling vessel brought them

back to Europe. It was too early now for any of these northern birds of passage to be seen. In the harbor were only small trading schooners, an occasional pleasure yacht, and a few miscellaneous vessels.

One afternoon, a week or two after her arrival at Elmendorf, Queen Honoria was driving herself along by the water's edge. Nanon's detestation, Mlle. Clara von Ettersberg, was beside her, and a groom was up behind. The team of young Hungarian horses were very fresh, and Her Majesty, who was perfectly fearless as far as horses were concerned, took a keen delight in making them show their paces. She would drive down close to the water, in the wake of a big wave, and then race with the next one up the gentle slope of hard-packed sand. The horses understood what was required of them, and it was very seldom that the curling, foaming sea-water touched even the tips of their shining black hoofs. When it did, there was a shower-bath for everybody, but the Queen did not care. This sport always excited the horses greatly; and it was with a feeling of relief that Mlle. von Ettersberg, who was getting very nervous,



called Her Majesty's attention to a yacht that had just anchored in the harbor, and out from which a launch was putting ashore. She knew the keen interest Her Majesty took in all that came from the sea, and hoped that it would prove a diversion. So it did.

"We must wait and see who they are,—Englishmen probably," said the Queen. "If I drive slowly we shall get to the wharf just about the time they land." Driving slowly was easier said than done, but Her Majesty accomplished it so well that they reached the pier just as three men, Englishmen apparently, stepped off into the sandy road. All threw away their cigars, took their hats off, and stood respectfully on one side. Her Majesty started slightly as her eyes fell on the nearest of the three. She pulled her horses up to a full stop.

"Ah, Count Waldeck, who would have expected to meet you here," she said graciously, holding out her hand to him.

"Your Majesty is well?" he asked, when he had touched the back of her glove with his lips.

"Yes, thank you. I always am. I don't think you have ever met Mlle. Clara von Et-

tersberg, Count Waldeck. You are such an incorrigible deserter. Won't you introduce your friends to me?"

"If Your Majesty will allow me to. Lord Alfred Stanton and Mr. Arthur Greer. We are taking a cruise in Mr. Greer's yacht," he explained.

"I hope you were not going to leave without coming to see us," Her Majesty went on, when she had spoken graciously to Waldeck's companions. "You can't pretend you did n't know we were here, with that bale of goods floating from the top of the castle."

"I did not know but that Your Majesty would consider it a liberty." The Queen did not answer, but turned to Lord Alfred.

"Count Waldeck pretends to be a very humble and loyal subject of ours," she said; "but I notice that he is not very particular about paying his respects to our person. I doubt if he has ever been at our court in his life."

"I plead guilty, Your Majesty," Count Waldeck answered. "I am afraid I should n't know how to behave myself properly. I'd trip on my sword and tumble over stools if I tried to walk backwards."

“Well, we don’t have anything of that sort at Elmendorf. Every one walks the way he was made to go, so I hope you and your friends will come to dinner with us informally to-night. We dine at half-past seven without a bit of ceremony. We have almost as comfortable a time of it as if we were private individuals. There will be only Mlle. von Ettersberg, Baroness von Altenheim, who chaperons us young things, and myself.”

“I was once presented to our gracious sovereign,” Lord Alfred said, when they had expressed their thanks for the invitation, “but I was so frightened that I don’t know whether I did anything very dreadful or not, and nobody ever told me, so I hope I won’t disgrace my country.” Lord Alfred was twenty-eight, but he looked ten years younger and acted accordingly. The Queen gave him a gracious smile as she said :

“I would tell you a secret if Mlle. von Ettersberg was not here. She thinks I am not so particular about etiquette as I should be, so I don’t dare. Well, my horses are getting impatient. I am very glad to have met all three of you. *Au revoir.*” She drove off sitting up

very straight, and managing her horses in the most approved fashion.

"Is *that* your Queen?" Lord Alfred demanded of Waldeck. "Well, she's a winner and no mistake! Will I go to dinner with her? Well, I just guess I will, as Greer would say."

"I shall want at least two hours to make myself beautiful in, so we can't explore much," said Mr. Greer, who was tall and clever looking. Count Waldeck said nothing at all, but stood watching Her Majesty out of sight, until his friends began to make fun of him.

"Well, Waldy," said Lord Alfred, "if I had n't heard it from her own lips—God bless them—that you never went near her, I should suspect she was the charmer who had stolen your good spirits."

"It was very suspicious, this ardent championship of the water of Elmendorf," Mr. Greer added. "I never noticed a craving for water in him before. Come now, Waldy, own up. I'll back you. I never saw anything like that smile she gave when she saw you."

"And Eddystone was n't in it with Waldeck's face," put in Lord Alfred.

"Come, fellows, shut up. It is n't respectful."

"Your prospective Majesty does n't like your humble slaves to take liberties?" said Lord Alfred. Hugo knew by experience that getting angry was the worse possible policy with these two friends of his, and the surest way to make a joke last, so he shrugged his shoulders good-naturedly and turned his steps towards the town.

It was a beautiful gown that Queen Honoria put on for dinner that night, the creation of a French artist.

"I feel quite excited!" she exclaimed to Mlle. Clara, "quite like a school-girl at her first ball. You see, we have lived so quietly since we have been here; and I do like Englishmen, they are so simple and natural, and they don't do their manners and pay you compliments as Frenchmen do. Dear me, why was n't I born a gypsy, with one big dish for the family to eat out of!"

"Your Majesty would n't care for the dirt," suggested Mlle. von Ettersberg.

"Well, I suppose there would be nothing to prevent my removing a little of it myself. The

idea of my being a lazy, good-for-nothing Queen!" There was a decided touch of scorn on the last word. "Why, all my idleness can't get rid of this," and stretching out her round smooth white arm, she showed an undeniable lump of muscle just below the elbow.

"And sometimes I feel so full of life and energy that it seems as if I had got to go out and run and shout. That is why I love my Hungarians so, they give me enough to do for once. Dear me! Elmendorf air is getting in my head, and it always does after I have been here a little while. To-morrow morning early, I shall go down to my bath-house and take a swim away out to Turret rock and back, while you paddle and shiver in the shallow water near the shore. Poor Clara! It's too bad that you had to have such a crazy kind of a queen, who can't bear embroidery, and likes to run races with Sunny, when there's no one by to see!"

Mlle. von Ettersberg privately thought so too. In spite of her boast to Nanon, her mistress was entirely incomprehensible to her narrow little mind. She was lazy, self-indulgent, malicious, vain, affected, and ridicu-

lously prudish, and, consequently, utterly incapable of understanding an energetic, magnanimous nature like that of the Queen's, a nature that stooped to nothing small, that despised pretences and small manœuvres, and spoke out her thoughts with the freedom that only a pure-minded person can indulge in. Clara was hopelessly behind her age. She lowered her eyes before a man, and would have died before she mentioned her stockings; yet she would repeat tales of those around her, full of accusations and suspicions that made the Queen blush and change the subject with open displeasure. Now, however, she only said resignedly:

“Ah, Madam, Your Majesty would have made a perfect gypsy.”

“My hair is almost dark enough, though my skin and eyes are not. Speaking of looks, though, what do you think of Count Waldeck's? Do you think he is handsome? I will give him to you for dinner—the Baroness can have Mr. Greer—so you must get all your charms in good working order. He is a desirable, you know.”

“The best match in Your Majesty's king-

dom," said Clara, who was rather pretty, but, for some reason or other, had not succeeded in finding a husband to suit her. The Ettersberg requirements were very high. The arrival of Count Waldeck caused hope to spring up afresh, so, adjusting the smile she reserved for great occasions, she followed her royal mistress down stairs.

"It has n't been so very awful, after all," Lord Alfred, the irrepressible, confided to Her Majesty after dinner, when they were all walking in the garden in the long northern twilight. The Queen laughed.

"I hate it just as much as you do, but I can't get away from it. It seems like putting on a suit of armor and walking around the streets with your vizor down. It's just about as modern."

"By Jove, but you're a girl of sense," Lord Alfred was beginning, and then he stopped, overcome by the disrespect of his words. The Queen laughed so hard that she had to sit down on one of the garden benches; but not another word could Lord Alfred be induced to speak further than monosyllables accompanied by "Your Majesties."



Count Waldeck and the Queen had hardly spoken to each other. Mlle. von Ettersberg had kept him glued to her side and demanded all his attention; but now he approached and said that he had persuaded Mr. Greer to bring his guitar, thinking Her Majesty might like to hear him sing. "He has quite a reputation in London," he added.

"Where is he?" asked the Queen. Lord Alfred offered to go and find him, being glad to get away from so dangerous a vicinity. The royal manner vanished with him. She motioned Hugo to a seat on the bench beside her. Then they exchanged one long look.

"I have n't changed a bit," she volunteered. "Of course, I have to do the Queen before people, but I am just the same old goose." Hugo's face lit up.

"Oh, my Queen!" he said.

"Is that what you call me?" asked Her Majesty.

"Nora," he said affectionately.

"That is better. But they will be here directly; and, Hugo, I must see you alone before you go. I have something very particular to say to you. I am going to walk in the forest

to-morrow afternoon, Sunny and I, and I will be on the top of that little hill over there at four. There is no path. You have to make your way through the trees. Consequently, nobody ever goes there but me." Hugo's face lit up again, but—

"I will be there," was all he said. "Can't I see the 'precious lambkin'?" he went on a minute or two later.

"Of course. I will send Clara for him. But, first, I want to tell you that you must not look at me again to-night. That Clara has the eyes of a bird of prey."

"And the instincts of one," Hugo added mischievously. Honoria laughed.

"Did you see through her so soon? It was partly my fault; for I suggested to her that you were a desirable *parti*, not but that she knew it already. In fact, I think her plans were matured from the first moment she heard your name. Is n't this wicked of me? But it is so delicious, gossiping with you, Hugo, and saying mean things about people. One has to like a person very well to like to gossip with them,—I mean, I do. No, sir; keep your hands at home. They 'll be here any minute."

"I did n't know I looked at you," Hugo con-

tinued. "I thought I was discretion personified. I don't see what I can do. I can't keep my eyes away every minute unless I turn my back to you, and I suppose that would n't be the thing. I warn you that if you don't turn up to-morrow afternoon, I shall come down here and demand you boldly. Here they come—damn them." Honoria laughed instead of reproving him as she ought to have done.

"Now do be careful," was all she had time to say.

Mr. Greer was profuse in his apologies. A string was found to be broken in his guitar, and he had to wait until Mlle. von Ettersberg got another from one of the pages. He had a beautiful voice and sang in an easy, natural manner.

"Sing something of your own, Greer," Count Waldeck said at last. "Her Majesty will like to hear your version of *Late, late, so late*. Your Majesty remembers that this is the song Tenyson makes the little nun sing to Queen Guinever when she has taken refuge in the convent at Almsbury."

"I remember," Her Majesty replied with a smile. The tears were in her eyes when Mr. Greer finished, but no one saw them except

Hugo, for she turned away her face. She dropped her fan to the ground. He got down on his knees to pick it up from under the bench, and managed to kiss the bottom of her gown, unseen by any one.

"Be careful," her eyes said to him, and then she thanked Mr. Greer most royally. "Count Waldeck would like to see Sunny: he is interested in dogs. Will you get him please, Clara," she added a little later when Mr. Greer was putting his guitar in its case.

"Why, Waldeck, he seems to know you," Lord Alfred exclaimed when Sunny had appeared and greeted the Count with evident demonstrations of joy.

"All dogs do that," Count Waldeck explained mendaciously. "Well, Sunny, old fellow, you know a friend when you see him, don't you?" Sunny had another ecstasy of joy, and had to be forcibly torn from him when Lord Alfred declared it was time to go.

"Perhaps I ought to have waited until Your Majesty dismissed us," he added apologetically, observing that Waldeck smiled.

"Not at Elmendorf," said Her Majesty graciously.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A RED-LETTER DAY.

IT was a little past four the next afternoon when, having made her way through the thick growth of pines that covered its slopes, Queen Honoria found herself at the top of the little hill she had pointed out to Hugo. He was there before her, and was cutting something with his penknife on a tree. There was a little natural clearing where he stood, with an out-look in all directions through the branches of the tall trees, and her footsteps made no noise on the soft needles, so she was within a few feet of him before he heard her.

"Well, Orlando," she said, "what are you doing?"

"Come and see," he answered. He had cut "Nora" in the soft bark, with beautiful flourishes on all sides.

"You boy," she said affectionately, holding

out her hand to him. He took it and kissed it fondly, then made as if he would draw her to him, looking at her inquiringly all the time. The Queen shook her head and said proudly :

“No, Hugo. You surely do not think I came for that? ”

“Why not?” he asked boldly. “Have you grown too proud since you cast off your sun-bonnet? ”

“Yes, but not in the sense you mean. I am too proud as a woman, not as a queen. It would not be my place to make a rendezvous with you for—spooning.” Hugo laughed.

“I don’t care,” he exclaimed impulsively. “I know I have got to go to-morrow and that heaven only knows when I shall see you again, and, all the same, I am so radiantly happy at just being with you that I’d like to stand on my head.”

“Sit down on the ground by me instead,” Honoria said with a laugh. “Yes, you can come nearer if you won’t touch me. Now, Hugo, I want you to be very good and serious, as you were when I first knew you, because I’ve got something very important to talk over with you.”

“ May I say ‘ fire ahead ’ to my sovereign lady? ”

“ You may say anything you like to her, so long as it is n’t love-making.” She hesitated a minute and then plunged into her subject. “ I suppose you have kept yourself posted in regard to what is going on at home? ”

“ Yes. I probably know more about it than you do. I have several correspondents among the initiated.”

“ Well, things are going from bad to worse, and will keep on doing so, so long as Baron Hausman is at the head of affairs. I am powerless, for my ignorance is his strongest hold on me; and he takes care that I shall learn just as little as he can help. I never can get him to give me a satisfactory explanation of a single detail of State business; and the trouble is that no one understands it but himself. If I dismissed him, my blunders would probably precipitate matters. You once reproached me with not doing anything to relieve the people, but what can I do? Baron Hausman proves to me conclusively that everything I suggest would have just the opposite effect; and he convinces me every time, although I generally

go back to my original opinion afterwards. How can I lighten the taxes when the government is not paying its expenses now? I cannot cut down the army, for that would be the signal for declarations of war against us. The papers say our currency is at the root of all our troubles, but no one seems to know exactly how this is so; or, at least, every one gives a different reason. And this is the way it is with everything. I am so ignorant that I am afraid to take a single step. It seems to be a deadlock, but I have a plan." She paused again.

"And that is?" Hugo asked, as seriously as she could wish.

"That you take his office. No, don't say a word till you hear me out. I know perfectly the difficulties in the way, but I do not think they are insurmountable. I know what an enormous sacrifice it would be, for, in that case, there would be no relations possible between us except that of Queen and Prime Minister; but is not the good of the people, the salvation of our fatherland, worth it? We can do anything together. The appointment of Count Waldeck, the first noble in the land, would be most appropriate in the eyes of every one,



especially when he is recognized as the friend of the people. Others have sacrificed their love for a principle, for some great good to be attained by doing it, so why can we not?" Hugo's face was inscrutable while she was speaking; but when she finished, with a little quick, agitated drawing-in of her breath, he looked up with a quiet smile, and said composedly:

"You are younger than I thought, my Queen. Do you really think it would be possible for you and me to meet every day as Queen and Prime Minister and as nothing else? That might be done in heaven, though I am rather inclined to doubt it. Of course, we could make one great sacrifice for a noble cause; we could give each other up and persist in it to our dying days, provided we lived apart; but to see each other at all hours and under all circumstances, and neither show our love to each other nor to the world, my dear simple little girl, do you honestly think, in the bottom of your heart, that we could do this? But I know you do, or you would not have suggested it," he added quickly. "I think what I love best about you, my Nora Creina, next to your own

sweet self, is your absolute honesty and freedom from pretext."

"I will be quite frank with you, Hugo," Honoria replied. "I did think so, really and truly, until yesterday. I have only sort of pretended I thought so since then."

"May I kiss your hand?" Hugo asked humbly.

"A queen's hand is common property," she said as she gave it to him. "But I hate to give up my plan. My poor, poor people, what is to become of them, or of me?"

"And I cannot say, 'Come to me,'" Hugo remarked sadly. "You could never be my wife."

"No; it would not be legal. You knew that, did n't you? According to our laws, a marriage between a reigning sovereign and a subject is null and void. Otherwise, I would choose you openly before all the world." She drew herself up as she said this.

"I thank you, my Queen," Hugo said simply. "But even in that case, I could not do it. Am I the man to be a Prince Consort, the ornamental appendage of a crown? I am afraid that not even my love for you could stand the friction of such a position." Honoria sighed.

"It is a *cul de sac*," she said, mournfully. "The only possible solution is an impossible one."

"Yes," he said. "You might give up the world for me, and we should both be unhappy ever afterwards,—I being always conscious of your sacrifice, you feeling the disgrace and, after a little, what you had given up; and both of us regretting our power for good in the world, which we had lost by showing ourselves incapable of governing ourselves."

"And yet you don't seem to think we are capable of self-control as it is."

"My dear, dear girl, to know when to run away is one of the first principles of self-government. Sometimes there is nothing else to do. It is no use, Nora; we are both overburdened with conscience, so the only thing to do is to take up our crosses. We know we love each other, that is a great deal—It is the coldest comfort in the world," he broke off impulsively, "when it is you, your sweet self, body and soul, that I am eating out my heart for."

"It is a great deal to me," said Honoria. "The thought of you comes to me like a

glimpse of Paradise, when I am being bored to death. It is the first time I have ever had anything to contrast. You have no idea of the number of dull entertainments you have attended with me in the past three months. Oh, dear! I wish I could abdicate and be done with it; but I suppose I have no right to."

"No," Hugo answered slowly. "A great responsibility has been given you, and you cannot turn it over to any one else. What a terrible thing it is to have a conscience you are afraid to defy. Mine has made a perfect coward of me. If it were not for it, I would abduct you this minute and carry you off to one of the charcoal burners' huts in the mountains."

"Would n't it be delicious! No Clara, no stupid old Baroness, only you and me, Hugo."

"I don't dare talk of it or think of it," he answered shortly. Neither of them said a word for some minutes. "But where is my friend Sunny?" he asked at length.

"I left him barking at the foot of an apple-tree, in the top of which a cat was sitting. He refused to leave, and I saw the cat was safe, so I came without him. When do you sail, Hugo?"

"To-morrow night. When you get back to the Castle, you will find a polite note from Greer, dictated by myself, inviting you and your ladies out for a day's cruise. We are going around among the islands, and will have luncheon on one of them."

"How perfectly lovely!" she exclaimed. "But, Hugo, we must behave ourselves. You must n't look at me or speak to me alone. Do you understand?"

"Let me manage to get you alone just once, as near the others as you like, and I'll be a model of discretion the rest of the time."

"For five minutes only?"

"For five minutes only."

"How nice this is! I thought I should have to say good-by to you now, and was trying to nerve myself up to it; for I ought to have gone home half an hour ago." She rose to her feet without waiting for him to help her up.

The next day was beautiful, and so was Queen Honoria in her yachting costume of blue serge. Mlle. von Ettersberg's dolly prettiness was quite eclipsed. The latter had made an elaborate toilet for the occasion, and had been distressed at Her Majesty's simplicity.

Fortunately, she did not know what a good background her elaborate gown and still more elaborate arrangement of flaxen ringlets made for this same simplicity.

"There is nothing I love like yachting," Her Majesty declared enthusiastically to Mr. Greer, as they steamed out the bay, "unless it is going out in a little cutter when there is a stiff breeze, and the waves are running high," she added.

"Your Majesty is never—unhappy?"

"Not the least bit in the world. Both Mlle. von Ettersberg and the Baroness are, though," she confided. "They were much distressed at the prospect to-day, but I brought them all the same; for, of course, I could n't come if they did n't. You see how tyrannical you get when you have somebody to tyrannize over who can't rebel. You may be thankful you are not one of my subjects, Mr. Greer." There was not the least trace of coquetry in Her Majesty's manner as she said this, only simple ease and friendliness.

"I only wish I were!" Mr. Greer exclaimed enthusiastically. "I would n't neglect my opportunities like Waldeck, I can tell you. I'd

apply to be made first skipper in ordinary to Your Majesty, and we 'd have some fine cruises. I'd take Your Majesty over to my home—America."

"Are you an American, Mr. Greer? I thought you were English."

"Did n't Your Majesty recognize my brogue?"

"I am so glad. I have never met but one or two Americans before, and I want to ask you some questions about your government and institutions and ways generally. Do you mind?"

"Mind, Your Majesty? I should say not,—if I can answer them." They plunged into a political discussion that lasted till lunch-time. She found him very clever and well informed, and would have enjoyed talking with him greatly if there had not been a some one else on board. Count Waldeck, in the meanwhile, patiently listened to Mlle. Clara's empty-headed but purposeful chatter; and Lord Alfred tried to calm the Baroness's fears. Her one idea was whether it was likely to be rough. Not a glimmering did she appear to have on any other subject. When they had landed on the

beautiful little wooded island where luncheon was to be served, Lord Alfred remonstrated privately with his friend on his monopoly.

"I'll be hanged if I talk to that old idiot while you flirt with Her Majesty,—just like your American cheek, confound it. I won't be in Waldeck's shoes either. Mlle. Airs and Graces shall not make love to me."

Queen Honoria was standing a little apart, watching some vessels far out at sea, when Count Waldeck joined her.

"Now, my Queen?" he asked.

"Yes, now," she answered. "I am having such a lovely day, Hugo. I was talking to Mr. Greer, but I was n't thinking of him. You see I won't give you a chance even to pretend to be jealous."

"It would n't take much of a chance."

"What a mistake I have made!" exclaimed Honoria. "I have never tried to do it once. Anybody would know I was very inexperienced. But, Hugo, I can't make you out at all to-day. I had hard work reconciling you with the Hiller of my first acquaintance, and now Count Waldeck seems a different person still. You don't seem the same, someway."



“How do you mean, my Queen?”

“I don’t know that I can explain. It is something I feel. You seem so much less impulsive, less enthusiastic, more passive.”

“You must remember I have been through a great deal since I saw you; and then I have not the faculty of forgetting everything in the present moment.”

“Is that a reproach? I know I deserve it. It is such happiness to see you again that I cannot realize it is not to last forever. I could sing and shout with joy. Never mind, I shall be unhappy enough to-morrow. Let me be happy if I can, dear; it does not mean that I love you any the less; it is just my way.”

“You said you never tried to make me jealous,” Hugo went on; “but I have been, all the same. I always take the *Court Gazette*, and when I read that another suitor has presented himself to demand the hand of the Queen, I see scarlet for several days. I am ashamed to confess it, but I did not like to see you so interested in your talk with Greer. He is a fine fellow, very clever and all that sort of thing; and you had met so few men of the world when you fell in with me, you poor little nun.”

"You need not be afraid. I shall never marry one of those imbecile princes."

"Ah, my Queen, that is easy to say and to think; but how can I tell what arguments that old humbug of a Baron may not use? I am afraid of that terrible sense of our country's needs which you have. I think it would carry you to any lengths. You would have given up our love for it, you know."

"Yes; but I would never marry a man I did n't love, no matter what the alternative was. I could not, even if I wanted to. Hugo dear, can't you understand? It would be a physical impossibility for me. I could no more do it than I could—burn Sunny alive, or stab you in the back. Won't you believe me?"

"I will believe it till I read about the next one," Hugo said sadly. Honoria sighed.

"Come, we must go back to the others," she said. "You have made me as melancholy as yourself, but never mind that now. How did you get along with Clara?" she asked, as they walked over to where the table-cloth was spread on the grass.

"There has been one continual wonder in

my mind all morning, why you had her about your royal person."

"It is very simple. I can't get rid of her without offending the Ettersbergs, and I cannot afford to do that. She was not my choice. Baron Hausman committed me so that I had to take her. Besides, I am used to her, and she does not bother me much now, and we see very little of each other. If only she were n't so jealous of me! I am always having to soothe her down. I don't mean that she cares anything about me, quite the contrary; but she is jealous of the attention I receive, as if it were not *ex-officio*; and she does n't like to have me look well, or receive any special or distinguishing notice. I shall have to pay for it for keeping you so long to myself. Well, Mr. Greer, are n't we going to have something to eat pretty soon? I am almost starved."

"Immediately, Your Majesty. Will Your Majesty kindly sit here?"

It was a pleasant little meal, but it had to be hurried over, for the wind was freshening; and, even as it was, they had difficulty getting on board again. Mlle. von Ettersberg and the Baroness began to look pale even before they

were on the yacht, and retired below immediately, with martyrdom, and 'I told you so' plainly written on their unhappy faces. The Queen's spirits had risen again.

"Dear me, I suppose it is wicked to be glad, but I feel like a school child when the teacher leaves the room," she said, when she and her companions had established themselves in a cosy corner, with plenty of wraps. Hugo was beside her, and held an umbrella to keep the spray off. He had wrapped his mackintosh around her, and had borrowed a yellow pea-jacket from one of the sailors for himself.

"Never mind. They are both thoroughly good fellows," he had whispered when the Queen had made a silent protest against his sitting beside her. All his moodiness seemed to have left him.

"No, I thank you," he said to Lord Alfred, who had offered to relieve him of the umbrella. "I hold the hereditary office of umbrella-holder to Her Majesty. It has been in the Waldeck family for centuries."

"Is that true?" Lord Alfred asked, turning to the Queen.

"Would you doubt your friend's word?"

"I 'd doubt anything that would keep me from being useful to a queen. I do love to be useful, and someway, Victoria and I do not hit it off so well as we might."

"Is that the way you speak of your sovereign?" the Queen demanded. "I wonder if my subjects speak of me so. Does Count Waldeck call me Honoria?"

"Not he. He bows his head whenever Your Majesty's name is mentioned. Why, he almost knocked me down last night because he thought I said something disrespectful about Your Majesty. It was n't really, but he 's so dreadfully touchy. I would n't be that loyal for worlds."

"What was it you said? You 'll have to tell me now."

"May I, Waldy?" asked Lord Alfred.

"I don't care. I 'm not responsible for you, thank the Lord. You had better take care, though. You are in Her Majesty's dominions, you know, and it may be the worse for you. There is a citadel at the capital with some dungeons in it at Her Majesty's disposal."

"Don't let him frighten you, Lord Alfred. I am only a little two-for-a-penny queen, with

all the bother and fuss, and none of the importance. I won't hurt you. We give you our royal word."

"I only said Your Majesty was a jolly girl," Lord Alfred explained, "and almost lost my life in consequence." The Queen laughed.

"I would be if I had the ghost of a chance," she said, half in jest and half in earnest. "Do you know, Lord Alfred, this is the first time in all my life I ever talked alone with strangers, without ladies in waiting and duennas standing by and criticising every word I said. If Mlle. von Ettersberg were here, she would be shocked to death at my saying 'a ghost of a chance'; indeed, this conversation could not have happened at all. Slang, or even colloquial expressions, are her abhorrence."

"I don't see how Your Majesty had the ghost of a chance to learn any," Mr. Greer remarked.

"Mme. Duvalet, my governess, used to say that I had the most extraordinary faculty for picking up things I was n't expected to know. Besides, Mr. Greer, I am an inveterate novel reader. I know a great many of your American authors."

"Which does Your Majesty like best?" he asked, and then the talk turned to books.

None of the four ever forgot that afternoon, sitting close together on the leeward side of the yacht, with the wind fresh in their faces and an occasional jet of spray dashing up and sprinkling them. Lord Alfred never spoke of Her Majesty afterwards but as "the jolliest girl I ever knew"; and Mr. Greer talked of their day's cruise until his family and friends declared the honor had turned his head.

"I don't believe she was half so clever and amusing as you and Alf thought her," said his sister, who had married Lord Alfred's elder brother the Duke. "I am sure I should have seen nothing in her but a stubby, insignificant little tow-headed girl, who thought it a very big thing to be queen of that potato patch of a country. It was very kind and condescending of her, and yet I have no doubt you could buy the whole of it, Arthur, and never miss the money."

"How about Waldeck? He is only one of her many subjects, and I don't notice any lack of the necessities of life about him."

"Oh, Count Waldeck," said the Duchess, and

the conversation ended. She had met Waldeck in town more than once the season before.

“By the way,” Mr. Greer put his head back through the door to say this. “By the way, Mary, Her Majesty’s hair is dark and wavy, and she is an inch taller than you. I have sent for her picture, and you shall see it when it comes.”

To Honoria’s delight, Hugo was the jolliest of them all that afternoon. It was a great pleasure to her to see him, for the first time among his equals, not merely holding his own, but evidently a person of consequence to them. When they got in the lee of some islands, the wind dropped so that Mr. Greer could get his guitar and sing to them. Then they had some part songs, and then they were out in the wind again.

Fortune favored Honoria and Hugo now in the appearance of a yacht about half a mile from them. Mr. Greer and Lord Alfred, who were enthusiastic yachtsmen, ran to the other side to get a look at her, and see if they recognized her.

“I didn’t hope for this,” Hugo began when he was alone with Honoria. The latter sighed as she asked a little impatiently :



“Why will you speak to me so deferentially? Oh, it is a dreadful thing to be a Queen! Even you cannot get from under the shadow of it and treat me like a woman, the woman who loves you. It is just as well we cannot see each other often; for we are getting farther and farther away every minute, and that would break my heart. I think you would have had no difficulty at all in accepting the position I offered you.” Hugo began to protest, but she interrupted him: “I am not blaming you. It is something you cannot help. It is my fate. It has been decreed that I am never to be near to any human creature, and I am so lonely! Without absolute equality, love is a farce. I never should have loved you, Hugo, if I had known you as a queen. I told you to-day you did not seem the same person to me. Your personality would always be attractive, but there is none of the old enthusiastic manner, the domineering way I loved so, that made me put on my old plaid shawl when I was not cold and sit down when I wanted to stand. You never tease me now, nor make fun of my ideas. You are the most democratic man in the world, but my rank impresses you in spite of yourself.

It must be that, for you were never in the least afraid of me—I should say you were not! Have I got to lose you in spirit as well as in fact?”

“I cannot help it,” he answered, looking unutterable things at her. “I cannot help being afraid of presuming on our past, and I can believe only by fits and starts that you love me. I am afraid of being too familiar, of having you assume the royal manner to me. That I could n’t bear and—” He stopped abruptly as Mr. Greer joined them. Neither he nor Lord Alfred had been able to recognize the yacht.

When they came to anchor, Mr. Greer went below and brought up the Baroness and Mlle. von Ettersberg, the latter very sulky, and both limp, dejected, and orange colored. After they had been helped down into the launch, the Queen turned to Mr. Greer.

“This has been one of the pleasantest days I ever spent,” she said cordially, holding out her hand to him.

“Do I kiss it, Waldeck?” he asked in pretended embarrassment.

“No; you shake it,” said Her Majesty, and

completed his subjugation by giving him what he called a "good American hand-shake." She did the same to Lord Alfred.

"I don't suppose I ought to shake hands with Count Waldeck because he is my subject," she said, laughing.

"Oh, do," pleaded Lord Alfred. "Poor fellow, he will feel so badly. I will write a letter to the papers and explain if there's any talk about it."

"Kissing is good enough for me," Waldeck interposed. "Good-by, my Queen."

"I don't know but that Waldeck got the best of it," Lord Alfred said *à propos* of nothing, when they were having their after-dinner smoke. "He squeezed her hand while he kissed it. I saw him."

"You see too much, young man," Hugo answered good-temperedly.

## CHAPTER IX.

“THRONES MUST RING WITH WILD ALARMS.”

THE Queen was back again in her capitol, with nothing to look forward to but a long monotonous winter of ennui. The little time she had to herself was all that made it endurable. She had flung herself enthusiastically into the study of Political Economy. Hugo had given her a list of books on the subject in the early days of their acquaintance, and now she read them all. She read a great many works on history, too, and as many novels as she could find time for. She felt she could have been comparatively happy if it had not been for the long weary hours that the empty, purposeless duties of her position demanded ; hours when her mind deserted her body, and while her lips made mechanical remarks, she herself had time to go over the dear delights of the past and to dwell on the

unspeakable loneliness of the present. She often reproached herself for feeling this so keenly, for what was her present loneliness compared to that before she met Hugo? It was a keener, more constant sensation, to be sure, but there was a sense of satisfaction in its very acuteness. She now knew what she was missing, and the knowledge, painful though it was, was infinitely better than the sluggish content of ignorance.

The aspect of public affairs was getting daily more threatening ; but no one at court, except the Queen, heard danger in the murmurs that reached their ears. She had been among the people and knew that there was fire as well as smoke. The courtiers, with Baron Hausman at their head, despised them too much to believe that they would take definite action of any kind.

“Your Majesty need not be alarmed. It is all talk: they won’t do anything,” was the formula with which he finished all their audiences. The Queen had ceased her attempts at political reform, feeling that a crisis was near at hand, and that any concessions would be looked upon as an evidence of fear and would thereby

precipitate matters; and she resolved that, come what might, she would stay by her post to the last. Although she knew that Hugo had lost his influence and was distrusted as much as herself by those he had led so easily eight months before, she could not help an unreasoning belief that he would be on hand and save her in case there should really be a popular uprising.

At Christmas, the Court went to Elmendorf for a week. The little hamlet had sunk into its winter's sleep. Two or three vessels, packed deep in the ice that stretched out for half a mile from the shore, were all that remained to testify to the summer's activity. Not a sail was seen on the horizon, and not a sign of life except an occasional curl of smoke from the top of what appeared to be a tall hillock of snow. The arrival of the royal party waked it up momentarily. The jingle of sleigh-bells was heard, and all the short days and far into the moonlit nights the dark stretches of ice were covered with the black figures of skaters. Mlle. von Ettersberg shivered in her furs and cursed the warm blood of her mistress as, with red nose buried in her muff and heart beating with apprehension, she skimmed over the snow at her

side, behind the Hungarians, excited almost beyond control by the frost in the air. Honoria's nose never reddened ; she never seemed to feel the cold ; and all day long she skated and drove, rejoicing in mere bodily activity. Poor little Sunny was for once in sympathy with Mlle. Clara, and shivered in his warm corner by a fire of logs. Nanon was a third, and often took it upon herself to remonstrate with the Queen.

"Your Majesty is not going out again?" she would say whenever she met her wrapped in her sables.

"No ; I put these on to sit in the house and do some embroidery," Her Majesty would reply.

"Poor Mlle. von Ettersberg," Nanon would continue, her heart softening toward her enemy.

"Shall I take you instead?" Her Majesty would ask.

"If Your Majesty wants to get rid of me, there is no surer way," Nanon would assert in her most tearful voice. "I know I am often a trial to Your Majesty, but it won't be for long."

"You hypocritical old goose," the Queen would interrupt her with. "I don't understand your sudden attack of compassion; but I am not going to take Clara with me any more. Her indigo face gives me the blues. I am going to take Oscar for a chaperon. He would be much more useful than Clara in an emergency, and I don't think even the most gossipy of gossips could accuse me of wanting to flirt with a stupid boy of sixteen who looks about twelve. Good-by, Nanon. If you have n't anything better to do, take Sunny in your lap and let him go to sleep there. Poor little fellow, he does n't live up to his name nowadays!"

At ten the Queen would come in from the arm of the bay that had been kept clear of snow for her especial use, put on a dressing-gown, dismiss her women, and sit down by the fire. All the excitement of the day was gone then, and stern realities stared her in the face.

"What a child I am!" she would say to herself. "Hugo was right to reproach me with it. If only there was n't any night and any reaction! But I would n't really have it so. This unhappiness on his account is worth all the un-



thinking happiness in the world. O Hugo, if you were only here with me!" And then she would lose herself in a happy dream of sitting close by his side in her sleigh, or skimming hand in hand with him over the smooth black ice, or, best of all, of sitting quietly here by the fire, with him on the hearth-rug at her feet, his head against her knees. At last she would rouse herself and go sadly to bed. Christmas Day was the worst of all, with the festivities and the pretence of good fellowship and good-will that but thinly covered the jealousies and hatred lying underneath. The mockery of a Christmas without love!

All the time she was at Elmendorf, Honoria was haunted with the desire to go up to the top of the hill where she had spent an hour with Hugo the summer before, and see her name on the tree where his fingers had put it; but the drifts were over her head, and snow covered the trees, even in that exposed situation, far above the letters carved there.

It was not until the end of March that the storm broke. Honoria had not thought it could hold off so long, and months before had

sent her jewels and most precious personal possessions out of the country into a place of safety ; but Baron Hausman was as unprepared and as surprised as if there had been no clouds in the sky. The occasion was a report, a false report, that went around to the effect that an additional tax was to be put on beer. The Baron had been urging this measure for a long time as the means of meeting the growing deficit in the treasury, but the Queen had steadily refused to sanction it. The mere rumor caused mass-meetings and great excitement generally ; and, at last, the most radical of the daily papers came out with the announcement that it was really true, reserving the comments that it did not dare make. This caused the cloud to break. Demagogues made the most of the opportunity. Concealed weapons were brought out from every corner. Companies were formed. One detachment marched to the Citadel and took possession, meeting with no opposition from the soldiers, who were entirely in sympathy with the movement. Stimulated by their success and by the casks of old wine they discovered in the cellars of the Citadel and broke open in the market-place, the crowd resolved to march on

the Palace and raise the tricolor flag they had adopted. What to do with the Queen was to be left to the impulse of the moment.

In the meanwhile, the wildest panic pervaded the Palace. Baron Hausman set out for the frontier at the first gun-fire ; and Clara and the Baroness besought leave to go to their friends, and to a less dangerous place, which was readily granted. Others followed their example, and by nightfall Her Majesty was left alone with Nanon, Oscar, Sunny, and a few frightened servants. Nanon steadily refused to leave. She had a nephew who was a person of importance among the rebels, and she looked to him to protect her, and in so far as he could, her royal mistress. Oscar proved faithful, too, which made the Queen regret her many remarks about his stupidity. Nevertheless, he was in an agony of terror, more for the Queen than for himself, and he besought her on his knees to fly and put herself in a place of safety. The Queen usually hated to sew ; but to-day she took out a piece of embroidery of Mlle. Clara's, and sat stitching steadily all day, careless of the havoc she was making in that beautiful piece of work. She did not feel especially alarmed. She knew

the people, though they did not know her, and, therefore, did not have terrors of the unknown to combat. Hers was the security of ignorance, for she had never seen them roused, and did not know the power of excitement and drink to transform a man into a wild animal. Then, she felt sure that Hugo knew what was going on and would be there to look out for her if there was any real danger. Her heart beat faster at this thought, as if she had heard his step in the next room,—a result that all the danger around her had been powerless to accomplish.

Towards five o'clock, the shouts and signs of uproar that had reached them at intervals, throughout the day, grew more distinct. Sunny barked uneasily, and Oscar, who was in one of the Palace towers, brought down word that a dark mass of men was pouring out of the east gate of the city, and taking the road that led to the Palace. He renewed his entreaties for her to escape, until his mistress stopped him, while Nanon began to weep and tell her beads. The Queen alone sat calmly by a window that overlooked the road, carefully choosing her silks.

“Clara has no eye for color, for all she does such exquisite work,” she remarked quietly to Nanon. The noise was coming nearer and nearer. The Palace gates were shut by the trembling servants, although the Queen had given no such orders. In five minutes more they would be before them. Did they come in peace or come in war; was it for compromise or murder?

“I should like to see him once more!” the Queen said half aloud, dropping her work for the first time.

At that moment a terror-stricken footman rushed frantically into the room, a big parcel in his hands.

“Please, Your Majesty,” he gasped. “A man is below at the east gate of the Palace with two horses. He said I was to give these clothes to Your Majesty to put on, and to give Your Majesty this.” It was a little gold whistle.

The next second, the Queen was alone in the room, with Nanon helping her into a rough suit of boy’s clothes.

“It’s all right,” she explained to the sobbing old woman. She had to raise her voice to be heard above the noise outside. “You need not be anxious about me. Count Waldeck has

come for me. I have been expecting him. Take good care of Sunny." The next minute she had disappeared, running down stairs like a boy, her hair bundled into a big felt hat. The mob was clamoring at the western gate.

"Hurry, we have not a moment to lose," a man in a rough suit of workingman's clothes called out to her as she let herself out the little gate at the east.

"O Hugo!" she exclaimed, flinging herself into the saddle of the horse he held for her. It was getting dark; but there was still light enough for some stragglers who were ahead of the detachment that was to attempt the eastern gate to see the two figures in the saddle.

"Halt!" one of them called in a voice of command. They urged their horses onward.

"Halt, or I 'll fire!" the voice repeated. Honoria's horse fell under her. With a quick leap she extricated herself from him. Her training at Elmendorf stood her in good stead now. Hugo took in the situation at a glance. He reached down his hand to her. She stepped on his foot and swung herself up behind him. The men came rushing up, only to find the dead horse and to hear hoof-beats in the dis-

tance. They fired an ineffectual volley in the direction from which they came ; but the prospect of sacking the Palace was too tempting for further investigating, even if there had been a horse among them.

"You are cold, my Queen?" Hugo asked, feeling her shiver. They had gone about three-quarters of a mile, and he had pulled up his horse ; for the shouts had died away in the distance, and no sounds of pursuit were heard. He took a cloak from his saddle-bow and gave it to her to put around her. She threw it around him, too, in spite of his protests.

"A little chilly," she answered mechanically, feeling somewhat dazed. "I shivered more from excitement than cold."

It was settling into a damp, dark night. Fog was on all sides of them and the dripping trees hung low over the road, which was a mass of unfathomable slush. The horse's hoofs sank down deep at every step.

"It was lucky for you, old fellow, that they did n't try to catch us," Hugo said, addressing him. "Did you think I was n't coming?" he went on to Honoria.

"I had just thought so," she answered, tight-

ening her arms around him and laying her cheek against his shoulder. He could feel her heart beat and the quick agitated heaving of her bosom.

"I had not expected it so soon, and it was late before the news could reach me."

"Where were you?" she asked, wondering at his undemonstrativeness. He might have parted from her the day before.

"Just over the frontier, at Helmen. That is where I am going to take you. I have secured passports and made all arrangements, so we shall have no difficulty getting in there. After that, you will travel as my sister until we reach Vienna, and then I will put you in the hands of my relatives there until you make some plans for the future. Undoubtedly a choice of royal protectors will be offered you as soon as this is known."

Honorias heart sank, and she involuntarily loosened her hold as she listened to his tone, which dismayed her even more than his words. It was calm, deferential, elder-brotherly, anything but lover-like. Did he mean that their lives should not come together, now when fate had at last removed the obstacle between



them? Evidently he did ; for, after a pause, he went on :

“I want to tell Your Majesty that you can trust yourself to me in perfect security, that I shall never forget my duty or my respect to my Queen ; for you will always be my Queen, no matter what new gods your people may choose to set up.”

“I am sure of it,” Honoria answered coldly. “I wish I were n’t so sure of it,” she added to herself. “Don’t call me Your Majesty, though, even to show your respect. It sounds so silly when I am in these clothes.”

“As you please,” he answered deferentially, and neither spoke for some minutes. Here was a new complication, when she had supposed all the difficulties to be over.

“I might have known it,” she thought petulantly. “Of course, he won’t make love to me when I am under his protection—in his power ; and when Hugo makes up his mind to a thing—! The question is, can I make him change it or not ? I am inclined to think I can !” Here she laughed a little laugh.

“What is it ?” Hugo asked.

“Oh, nothing. It was just nervousness.”

Hugo wrapped the cloak tighter around her, and she went on with her inward communings.

"It's too silly for words. As if he were a common kind of man that you could n't give an inch to, or several inches, and as if he did n't know I knew he was n't! I wonder what quixotic notion he has in his head now; it is n't all regard for our unconventional situation. I shall have to find out."

"Hugo."

"Well, my Queen?"

"Where are you taking me to now?"

"I was wondering how long before you would want to know. I am taking you to Waldeck Castle by a roundabout way. No one would dream of looking for a runaway queen there; and, besides, nothing could hire any of the people to go there after dark. You know they think it is haunted. My horse has been a long distance to-day, and this is too heavy a load. We are neither of us featherweights. I have had a couple of others in readiness at the Castle for months. We will spend the night there, and start for Helmen as soon as it is light, and if nothing happens, we ought to get there early in the afternoon."

“Will Mrs. Banner be at the Castle? I only asked for curiosity,” she added quickly. “I was wondering if she would recognize me in this rig.”

“No ; no one is there except a boy who takes care of the horses. You see, I did not expect to have to take you there. I thought we could go straight to Helmen. I was coming up here to-morrow to be in readiness.”

“Oh, I don’t mind. You are as proper a chaperon as any one could wish, yourself. I am glad Mrs. Banner is n’t here, because she would expect me to be ashamed at being in these clothes, and I am not at all. It is the only proper wear. Petticoats are an abomination.”

“An abomination that you seem to take a great deal of pleasure in.”

“Indeed, I do. I don’t know whether I hate or love my clothes the most. Poor things ! I wonder what is happening to them now. Perhaps the horrid, dirty creatures are dressing up in them. I only hope Nanon and dear little Sunny are all right. You know Schmidt is her nephew, and, of course, he’ll look after her. Clara left me early in the

morning—I am surprised you did not ask about her, Hugo—and so did the Baroness, Lord Alfred's admiration."

"And Baron Hausman?"

"Off the first minute."

"And you were there all alone?"

"Nanon, and Oscar, and Sunny were with me." Honoria could feel him start to say something, which he suppressed. She smiled a contented little smile.

"I can stand it as long as he can," she murmured to herself. "How strange that we should be talking of my clothes, and Clara, when such big things are happening over there," she went on, aloud.

"That's just it, they are so big," Hugo answered. "People don't discuss death at a funeral. But here we are, my Queen. I think you had better come around to the stables with me, and I will wake up the boy to take the horse."

But not a sign of a boy was to be found. Two horses were sleeping comfortably in their box-stalls, but not another occupant did the stable have. Hugo was inclined to be angry, but Honoria laughed, as she said :

"He has gone to see the circus. How could you expect him to stay here and miss it all? Here, I'll help you put him up. Do you think I don't know how to take care of a horse? You must let me: I'd love to. I have n't been doing a thing all day, except embroidery, while you have had a hard ride."

After they had made the horse comfortable for the night, Hugo led the way across the courtyard, unlocked a little door in the south-east turret of the castle, and led Honoria up a winding staircase to some rooms on the second story.

"I shall have to take you to my rooms, as they are the only ones habitable, except Mrs. Banner's, and hers are locked. You don't mind, do you?"

"Why should I?" asked Her Majesty, looking around, as well as the light of a stable lantern would permit, at the beautiful room in which she stood. "How lovely this is! You did n't show it to me that time, Hugo."

"No; it seemed safer not to. Will you go into my bedroom and make yourself at home, my Queen? It has no other door, and I will stay here."

"I don't have to go to bed this very minute, do I? I'm so cold, and hungry, Hugo." Hugo laughed.

"Not unless you want to. I was going to make a fire, and then hunt up something to eat. I have n't had a thing, myself, since breakfast."

"Let me make the fire; it will be quicker. There seems to be plenty of wood here. Dear me, how cold disused rooms are. This seems to have all the winter shut up in it. Now, Hugo, I don't want to have a continual fight with you, so I tell you plainly that I am going to do my share of the work on this expedition, just as if I were a real boy, not out of consideration for you, but because I want to. One of the hardest things for me to learn has been to be gracefully idle. Now, go."

When Hugo came back, he found a roaring fire of pine boughs, and Her Majesty lying stretched out in front of it. She looked very slight and boyish in her coarse suit of rough serge. The mass of hair on her head made a funny contrast. She did not get up when he came in.

"I am tasting the delights of being a boy," she explained. "What have you got there?"

I hope there's something to cook, and that you'll let me cook it."

"I could n't find anything but half a boiled ham, some stale bread, pretty fair butter, and a couple of bottles of beer. I told Mrs. Banner to leave something for me in case I wanted it, and that is what she left!"

"Well, what's the matter with that? I'll toast the bread on the tongs, and you can cut the ham. Isn't this fun? I don't believe you half appreciate it, Hugo."

"Ah, you don't know!" he answered, with more warmth than he had hitherto shown. Honoria turned away her head to hide a smile as she went on:

"But then, of course you are free to do this sort of thing any time; cast off the trammels of civilization, I mean, while I suppose I shall have to go back to slavery immediately. No doubt, whatever royalty I decide to let take me up will want to arrange a marriage for me. I don't suppose they will have any great difficulty about it even if I have lost my crown, because, you know, I have those big Hungarian estates my mother left me. I shall have plenty of money. I sha'n't have the slightest

difficulty paying you back what I cost you. All the same, Hugo, I think you might have invested a little more in these clothes. Were they a misfit, or did you get cheated? See, here!" and Queen Honoria poked her finger through a thin place in the cloth. Hugo laughed, although he did not look very much as if he wanted to.

"Why, I had to get something cheap and common-looking. They are not second-hand, though. As if I would bring you anything that had ever been worn before! You could n't travel around unobserved in a suit of Poole's."

"Oh, well, if it was n't miserliness," said Her Majesty, provokingly. "Dear me! I wish I could get warm. The chill seems to have got into my bones. To tell the honest truth, I am afraid I have n't on warm enough clothes underneath these things. You see, I did n't have the proper garments." Hugo laughed, as he rose to his feet, and said:

"Come with me to my sister's room. Her clothes are there just as she left them. Mrs. Banner keeps them aired; and perhaps you can find some things you would like." He picked up the stable lantern, which was all the



light they had except the fire and a couple of candles, and led the way out of the room. Honoria followed, their footsteps echoing dismally in the empty passage. He stopped at the end door, took a key off a bunch he had in his pocket, and unlocked the door. The room had a queer, disused odor, and the bed and windows were dismantled. Faded pink hangings covered the walls. Out of it opened a smaller room, lined with oak presses with drawers underneath. Nothing was locked.

"Here I 'll leave you to help yourself," he said, and retired into the next room. The drawers were full of the finest of underclothing, some warm flannels among them. Honoria made a selection and then opened the doors above. There were rows upon rows of party gowns, old-fashioned but fresh and unworn. She called Hugo back.

"It makes me feel so badly to see them," she explained. "Just think, she was younger than I, and she had eyes and hair just the color of mine."

"How did you know that?" he asked.

"You told me so yourself, some thirteen years ago. Yes, I remember every syllable you

said to me that day. And how I longed to remind you of some things when you told me about it! And she must have loved fun and dancing, and dear, delightful worldly things, or she would not have had such pretty clothes. See here!" She called his attention to a dancing-card that was hanging by its tassel to a hook on a white lace gown. Hugo lifted and opened it with reverential fingers.

"It was the last party she ever went to. Poor, dear Helena! I should like to tell you all about her some time. She came back here with my father and me, and we were going to settle down and have a home instead of vibrating between London and Paris; but she took a bad cold the week after we got here, and it turned into pneumonia, and then my father hated the place worse than ever, and we never came back again. That is why I have been so little at home." Honoria lifted the card, and pressed her lips upon it.

"Poor, dear girl!" she said, with tears in her eyes. "Perhaps one of the names that are scrawled here meant a great deal to her, though I don't believe she'd have left the card hanging on her gown, if it had, do you, Hugo? She'd have found another place for it."

"I never knew of her caring for any one, though I don't suppose I should have known about it if she had. She was only nineteen when she died, and so pretty and bright and attractive. She always had crowds of men around her, from the time she could walk, and she had such loads of artistic talent. I have a number of her sketches in my rooms at London that I should like you to see sometime. Is there anything here that you want? You had better take one of these cloaks to wrap yourself in." She chose a long wrap of heavy pink satin lined with ermine.

"Now, will you go to bed, my Queen?" Hugo asked, when they were back in his rooms.

"It is n't late, is it? I am not at all sleepy; and, besides, I don't suppose we shall see much of each other after to-morrow and next day, so we might as well make the most of it." Her tone was perfectly matter-of-fact. Hugo's face fell, but he only said:

"I don't think you had better undress. I don't expect any disturbance, but it is just as well to be prepared."

"No, I did n't intend to. Well, perhaps I had better go to my room, as we shall have to be starting so early. Good-night, Hugo."

“Good-night, my Queen. Do not be afraid, but I do not need to tell you that.”

There was a smile on Queen Honoria's face that almost became a laugh as, candle in hand, she shut the door behind her. She took off her boy's clothes, put on the warmer clothing she had brought, and then put them on again. Next she took down her long thick hair and arranged it in a picturesque fashion. After that, she wrapped the pink cloak around her, and going to the door, tapped gently and opened it. There was no light in the room except what the fire gave.

“Can't I please lie down on the other settle in here?” she asked. “It is so cold in there, and I am sure there are mice. Shut up places always have them. I feel rather nervous, too.” Hugo looked at the dazzling vision that stood before him; then turned away his head as he answered, as indifferently as he could :

“You will find it hard, but I will get a blanket to soften it and put over you.” He gave it to her and let her arrange her bed for herself on one of the settles that stood on each side of the recess in which the huge fireplace was situated. Honoria's heart sank down into her stout boy's

shoes, several sizes too wide for her, that looked so odd below her elaborate cloak.

"I shall have to try my last resort," she said to herself. Then aloud: "There is one thing we are forgetting, Hugo. My hair will give me away to-morrow unless we cut it off. I can't do it myself, so you will have to. I will get the shears off your writing table!" She brought them to him where he sat on the opposite settle and kneeled down in front of him, resting her arms on his knees. Hugo did not answer, but set his teeth, took the shears from her and turning his eyes away, made a blind reach with his hand for a lock of hair. The shears dropped to the oaken floor with a clang. He rose hastily to his feet, almost pushing her aside.

"What is it?" she asked, really alarmed.

"I can't do it," he said in a harsh voice. "That little curl in front of your ear caught around my finger just like a baby's hand." There was so much emotion in his voice that Honoria, for the first time, felt some compunction. She rose from her knees and murmured:

"I think I will go back to my room. I am warm now and this settle *is* hard. Perhaps I can hide my hair under that big hat." She

opened the door and shut it after her, completely checkmated. Hugo was standing at the window, gazing out into the darkness. He neither turned nor moved as she left the room.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE END OF THE BEGINNING.

SHE was awake when, at the gray dawn, he knocked at her door. In a few minutes she came out fully dressed. He was standing at the window, apparently just where she had left him, gazing out into the morning twilight. His face was outlined in the dim light, and Honoria could see that it was haggard and unhappy. He turned a little as she entered, and she went straight up to him in her boy's clothes that evidently did not cause her the slightest embarrassment. Her hair was fastened close to her head now, and the pink cloak was gone. There was no smile on his face when he saw her, but she did not stop for that. She put her arms around him and laid her head on his breast.

"Have I got to make love to *you*, Hugo?" she asked, and then she burst into a storm of

tears. Hugo had never seen her cry before, and did not know what to make of it. It subjugated him completely, however, and washed away the last remaining atom of his pride.

“How could you treat me so—be so hard and unloving?” she asked a few minutes later. “It is rather late in the day for you and me to consider conventionality; and as if I could n’t trust you to any extent, under any circumstances, even if you did show you loved me!”

“I didn’t want to take advantage and I wanted to leave you free, my Nora Creina,” he explained. “You had seen so few men, and since that day on the yacht I have been haunted by the horrible thought that you might not care for me if you knew other men. What am I that my Queen should love me?”

“Now, Hugo, once for all, we have had enough of this. I love *you*, do you understand? And if you were Hiller the workingman, I would marry you to-morrow,—if you asked me to. Indeed, in that case, I think I’d ask you. I don’t care what you are or are not. You are the one man in the world to me. Now don’t let me have to tell you this again for any other reason than that I want to. I am afraid I shall



make fierce love to you, Hugo; it is such a dreadful thing to have been used to take the initiative all your life."

"What did you torment me so for last night?" he asked a little later. Honoria blushed and hid her face on his shoulder.

"‘What did you torment me so for?’ But don't speak of that. I am ashamed of it. It was n't like me, either, like the self I have always known, that is, though I have always suspected I had possibilities of the Satanic order."

"I never had a doubt of that," he said fondly.

"There is one thing I don't understand," she went on half an hour after this, when they were riding on their way to Helmen. The boy had not yet turned up, so they had to saddle their own horses. Hugo had taken the precaution to place their breakfast of oats ready for them the night before. The horse he had ridden the day before he had left untied, so that he could help himself to his meals in case the boy did not return immediately. "I don't understand the way you have treated me ever since you discovered my identity. It is n't at all what I should have expected of Hiller's

sledge-hammer style of going about anything he had to do."

"I was angry at first, furiously angry," he explained, "but I could not stay angry long. Then after you came to me in the prison with your shining gown and your jewels and your white neck and shoulders and your royal manner, I could n't feel that so much loveliness was meant for me. I will admit that it is n't like my usual self to be so modest: it's a new development."

"There is n't much loveliness about it just at present," Honoria said, laughing a little to hide how deeply she was touched.

"You don't make a bad-looking boy at all. I should take you to be about fourteen or fifteen, and that sombrero hides your hair perfectly. I say, Nora, did you mean me to cut it off last night?"

"Don't talk about last night," she answered impatiently, blushing crimson, much to Hugo's delight.

"Well, I won't. I'll talk about this morning instead. Did you mean what you said about marrying Hiller to-day?"

"I said if he asked me." She had bent her

head so that her hat hid her face. It was the first time he had seen her at all troubled with shyness, and he could n't keep from teasing her a little, he was so pleased.

"The circumstances are so very inappropriate. Nora dear, I can't even take your hand. Just tell me you will, and I'll thank you a dozen times a day all the rest of my life."

"That is what they always say," Honoria answered, recovering her usual self, much to Hugo's regret. "But instead of 'Nora dear,' it will most likely be, 'Honoria, there's a button off my shirt again!'"

"I don't have any buttons on my shirts," Hugo protested meekly.

"You don't? You are quite sure?" Hugo made as if to take off his coat. "I'll take your word for it, thank you. Well, one barrier in the way to woman's independence is thrown down! Still, Hugo, it would be just as well for you not to marry me for my sewing qualifications. I don't think I ever sewed on a button in my life. I did a piece of embroidery once; it was some wild roses, and if you had seen it! Clara was too polite to laugh, but Nanon made lots of fun of it, and I had to laugh at it, too.

Someway, I had n't realized how awful it was until I saw it as a whole. Then I sewed all day yesterday. That is all, I think."

"Have n't you changed the subject enough now?" Hugo asked mischievously. He reached out and took her hand. "Nora, my Queen, will you marry me this very day?" She looked him straight in the eyes now as she answered:

"I am proud and glad to do it; but who can we get to perform the ceremony? Nobody would marry us if they knew who I was, and it would n't be legal if they did n't."

"Father Lalande is at the convent at Helmen, but I don't suppose he will hear of it," he suggested. "He has been there for a week. I suppose he had better information than I. The people are very bitter against the Jesuits just about now."

"Oh, if Father Lalande is there, it is all right! I can always make him do what I want."

"What arguments will you use this time? I confess I don't think you can manage it."

"Just wait and see."

"You have never told me how he and the Mother Superior came to let you have the key

to the convent gates," Hugo continued. "I have wondered a great deal about it." Honoria laughed.

"It was very simple," she said. "You know I am not a Roman Catholic, and have never been since I was old enough to know I had a mind. Mme. Duvalet saw to that. Well, I told them, politely but emphatically, that my renunciation of faith should be published in every paper in the Kingdom, if they did n't let me have it; and also the fact that Father Lalande, as my confessor, had known it, and had not reported it to His Holiness. Of course, it would have been a terrible blow to his prestige; and he knew—I reminded him of it, too—that there were only too many who would gladly follow my example; for the country has been priest-ridden too long not to be glad of an opportunity to cast off the yoke." Hugo laughed.

"If you were n't the cleverest! Those arguments won't have any effect this time, however."

"Just you wait and see," Honoria repeated enigmatically.

They had to ride slowly; for the lanes and

by-ways to which Hugo thought it safest to confine themselves were in a dreadful condition. For a long time they did not see a soul except one party of peasants making their way on foot to the city, to see if the dreadful rumors that reached them were true. After they had ridden about five miles, they stopped at a little farm house that looked a grade more promising than any they had passed, and got some goat's milk and black bread for breakfast. Hugo was inclined to be vexed that he could not get anything better for her, but Honoria eat their poor fare with such a good appetite, and expressed such pleasure in its appropriateness to their situation as fugitives, that he finally got into the spirit of the occasion and laughed with her. They were unquestioned and unobserved. All the more intelligent of the peasants had gathered together in the little villages they took such pains to avoid.

Towards noon, however, they had a fright. They were riding at a footpace along a narrow lane when they heard voices and saw a party of soldiers approaching. Honoria trembled, for there was no place to turn aside, and she had so often reviewed various regiments of

soldiers at the Capitol that her face was well known to many of them. Would any of these recognize her? Perhaps they had heard of her escape and were on the look-out for her. The soldiers were all in sympathy with the people ; it was in this that the latter's power had lain. The man at the head of the troop pulled up and signed to them to do the same. Honoria grew pale as she recognized one of the sergeants who had been on duty at the Palace, a gruff surly man, who had always scowled when she passed him. He gave her a curious, significant look, and then he broke into a rough laugh as he addressed her with a :

"Why, if it is n't Peter Reinhart! Well, Peter, my boy, how goes it? You've chosen a funny time to go back to work. All well at home? If this is n't the best joke! They telegraphed us at the next garrison to come over this way and intercept a boy and a man. Who do you suppose they thought you were, Peter?"

"I could n't guess," Honoria answered, in her deepest voice, entering into the spirit of the occasion.

"They thought you were the Queen running

away!" and then he laughed again. Honoria and Hugo joined him.

"That's a good joke!" exclaimed Honoria. "I suppose they sent you, Sergeant Brandt, because you were so long on duty at the Palace that you'd be sure to recognize Her late Majesty. Mother told me to look out for you as we rode through, and to say that she had some feathers she was curing to make you a pillow, and would send them to you the next time I came this way."

"Your mother's a fine woman. Well, so long. I'd like to stop and ask you about all the folks, but a soldier's time is not his own. I suppose you don't know any more about what's going on over there than we do?"

They drew up by the wayside and let the soldiers pass. For several minutes, Honoria could hear the sergeant laughing and talking to his men about the good joke of taking little Peter Reinhart, whom he had known since he was so high, for the Queen.

"He's not half her size," was the last thing she heard him say. Hugo and Honoria exchanged a long look as they started their horses up.



"He's a trump!" she exclaimed, drawing a long breath. "He was stationed at the Palace all last winter. I was so afraid you would say something, Hugo, when he called me 'Peter' that I shook all over. How fortunate it was that none of the others seemed to know me."

"I suppose he planned it all out in case it should be really you, and found out that they did n't. He did n't look quick-witted."

"I should say not! He was the worst actor I ever saw, but the men did n't seem to suspect anything. I never saw him before when he was n't scowling. I should think his good spirits alone would have made them suspicious. Well, Sergeant Brandt, you've done a good stroke of work this day."

"He shall hear from me shortly," Hugo declared emphatically. "His fortune is made."

They had no further adventures after this, although it was dark before they reached Helmen, they were so greatly delayed by the state of the roads, and the detours they had to make to avoid villages and much travelled thoroughfares. Honoria's high spirits had left her.

"I am afraid you are very tired," Hugo said affectionately, riding up close to her and laying

his hand on her shoulder. "My dear girl, I wish I could have spared you this."

"I am not very tired," she answered. "You know I am as strong as a horse. You need n't feel so sorry for me for what I have lost, either, for, you see, I have gained still more." She stooped her head and kissed his fingers lightly. "I feel a real sense of relief," she went on, a moment later. "You know I have never really liked social or labor problems as you do, though I have always thought it my duty to study them up. It is a relief to get rid of that awful sense of responsibility I have had ever since I was crowned, and before, too, for Madame Duvalet was always trying to make me realize it. I was naturally careless and happy-go-lucky and fond of amusing myself, and I want to be so again for a while. Of course, I know you would never be contented to be purely idle and frivolous for long, and I should n't like it if you were; but first let us have a real vacation, and then we will do whatever duty seems nearest to us. I should like it to be something for our people, if they will let us. Oh dear, I feel ten years younger!"

"Very well, my Queen. I shall not mind a

holiday myself. I shall be ten years younger when I get you over the frontier. I have been in such a continual state of funk all day that I have n't been able to think of the future at all. I can't believe that you are really going to belong to me, and that we shall be always together. O Nora, you told me once that I did n't know what loneliness was. I have learned it now. I begin to breathe more easily. Another hundred yards and we shall be over the border. I know our passports are all right. Hello there, guard!"

A soldier came out of a sentry box with a lantern.

"Count Waldeck, is it you, sir?"

"Yes, and I have my cousin with me. Here are our passports." The man took them away to show to his Captain. In a minute, the Captain, a young man with a red, good-natured face, came out himself.

"Ah, Waldeck," he said. "How was the country? Is it really true that the Queen is deposed? We have had all sorts of reports, but I suppose they are exaggerated."

"No; they are all true. Queen Honoria has left the country, they say. Tell the man to open

the gate now ; that 's a good fellow. We 've had a long ride, and the roads are unspeakably bad. I 'll tell you all you want to know to-morrow."

The heavy gate opened with a clang, and Queen Honoria rode into Helmen, and the danger was over. Hugo heaved a sigh of relief.

" Thank Heaven ! " he exclaimed. " Now I can begin to enjoy having you with me. I shall take you to the convent and put you in charge of the nuns until to-morrow, and you can try your wiles on Father Lalande."

" Dear me ! What will he say to these clothes ! I am glad he will know what has happened, or I should have hard work persuading him I did n't do it for fun. You know we are great friends in spite of our religious differences, but he agrees with you about my Satanic propensities."

" You will have to get the sisters to buy you some clothes that will do until we can get some others," said Hugo. " I will give them some money. I would have had some ready for you, only I had n't the remotest idea what to get, and I would n't trust any one with the secret that I intended to clope with my Queen. I

hate to let you out of my sight. I am so afraid Father Lalande will spirit you away, or make you promise to wait a year, or something."

"Trust me," Honoria said, with emphasis. "You said our train went at half-past nine? Well, come at eight to-morrow morning with a ring in your waistcoat pocket, and we shall see. I don't want you to come in with me. I want to prepare for your entrance on the scene. Good-night, my dear boy. Go and get a good night's sleep. I am sure you deserve it." He took her in his arms for a moment, then watched her mount the steps, and, after a little talk at the grating, disappear within the convent, her little bundle under her arm. Then he turned slowly away and led his tired horses down the dark, silent street.

In the meanwhile, Queen Honoria sat waiting for Father Lalande in the reception-room that was separated from the convent proper by an iron grating. Beyond this no males were permitted to penetrate. Father Lalande's quarters were in another building, with a separate entrance. It took some time to get him, and Honoria was so tired that she dropped off to sleep in her straight chair several times be-

fore he came. The last time, she was awakened by hearing a familiar voice say :

“ Well, my boy, what can I do for you ? I hear you have come to me on urgent business.” Honoria drowsily opened her eyes, then took off her hat, and smiled.

“ Your Majesty ! ” the priest exclaimed, and kneeling down, he took her hand and kissed it.

“ It ’s too dirty,” she protested. “ I am the Queen no longer, Father Lalande, but a fugitive. Do you think your good sisters will take me in for the night ? I thought I had better send for you and let you explain matters. They might not believe me.”

“ They will consider it a great honor, Your Majesty.”

“ Don’t call me that,” she begged. “ And, please, can’t I go to bed ? ” The good father smiled.

“ Immediately, my child. But would n’t you like some supper ? ”

“ I should like some bread and milk if I can have it after I go to bed—not otherwise. I ’ll tell you all about everything in the morning, Father,” and leaning her head against the wall, Honoria was sleeping peacefully by the time

Father Lalande had reached the door. She never knew exactly what happened after that, having only a very vague recollection of the Mother Superior coming in and telling her she was very welcome, of two sisters helping her to her room and taking off her clothes, and the next thing she knew it was broad daylight. For a minute, she could not remember where she was. The white walls of her little cell and the narrow iron bed suggested nothing to her, and then it all came back with a rush. All she had lost was forgotten. She had only room for the thought that to-day was her wedding-day, and that she and Hugo were never to be separated again. Then she remembered that she had not even spoken to Father Lalande. She rose hastily, bathed, and dressed herself in some clothes that were laid by her bed. The gown was a strange-looking affair of brown woolen, and evidently made for different proportions than her own. It was long enough, but loose and tight in the wrong places. Honoria laughed aloud as she put it on. She certainly did not look much like a bride. She was just putting the finishing touches to her remarkable toilet, when a sweet-faced little nun

came to tell her that Count Waldeck was in the outer parlor.

"Where is Father Lalande?" asked the Queen.

"He is with the gracious Count, Madame," answered the little nun. Honoria was alarmed at this intelligence, for she wanted to break the news to the worthy father herself, having had long experience in the art of managing him.

"Well?" she said inquiringly, as she entered the parlor. Hugo gave her a despairing look.

"I am sorry, my child," said the Priest, "but, much as I respect Count Waldeck, I cannot do it;" and he remained fast in this decision in spite of all the arguments which Honoria, seconded by Count Waldeck, brought forward to show that it was the only thing to do. At last the Queen grew openly impatient. She turned to the Count:

"Hugo, will you go out into the passage for a minute. I wish to speak to Father Lalande alone." He obediently left the room. In a minute or two, she called him back.

"Have you remembered the ring?" she asked. "You know we have n't very much



time." Ten minutes later, Her Majesty was Countess Waldeck.

It was not till several weeks later that Count Waldeck discovered what his wife's mysterious pull had been. She had refused to tell, saying that it was a political secret that was not her own to communicate. At last, one evening at Paris when they were driving in the Bois de Boulogne, the Count became so troublesome that the Countess agreed to satisfy his curiosity.

"You will be dreadfully disappointed," she said, with a smile. "Besides, I should think you would be ashamed to be so curious, Hugo: it's so womanish. I am a little ashamed to tell you, too." Hugo laughed.

"Well, are you going to tell me?" he asked.

"It was only a threat, you must remember, but all's fair in this sort of thing, so I told him I would dispense with the ceremony if he did n't. You see, he could n't keep me there by force exactly, and he thought it was another Satanic propensity. Dear me, Hugo, don't laugh so! You are making us so conspicuous. Everybody is looking at us."

"I can't help it," he murmured feebly. "So

that was your great political pull over Father Lalande ! My dear Honoria, I bow before the greatness of your intellect. I begin to think Greer is quite right about your amazing cleverness. To get ahead of a Jesuit in that simple manner ! ”

Thirteen months after this, two young men, who were riding in the park in London, came face to face, recognized each other, and pulled up their horses.

“ Hello, Stanton.”

“ How are you, Greer. I suppose you ’ve heard the news about Waldeck and Her Majesty ? ”

“ I heard they had been allowed to return home.”

“ Oh, that ’s ancient history ! This is the very latest. It seems the people are tired of trying to rule themselves, and they have invited them to do it for them. Hugo and Honoria the First, God bless them ! ”

“ Is he to be King and not Prince Consort ? ”

“ You bet he is, as you would say. Her Majesty would n’t hear of anything else. All the royal proclamations are to be signed ‘ Hugo and

Honoria,' and they are to go down to history so. And they are going to give the people a constitution and establish a senate, and make a limited monarchy out of the concern, when they might run the whole thing themselves!"

"Good for them!" exclaimed Greer. "They 're the right stuff."

"The jolliest girl I ever knew," Lord Alfred said sadly, "and to think of her charms being wasted over such things. She'll get as bad as Waldy with his good-government clubs and all that sort of tommy-rot. Really, Waldy was a very decent fellow when you got him out of the mire, but I suppose he's in to stay now. R. I. P."

"You heathen!" Mr. Greer exclaimed. "I wish you had gone to America with us last autumn. Would n't you have enjoyed it! We talked Political Economy and Social Science all the time."

"Excuse me! Besides, I don't believe it. No man in his senses would talk more than a very limited amount of that stuff to that adorable woman. I'll wager Waldeck never mentioned it when he got her alone, and I'm sure you did n't. By the way, Greer, how dread-

fully *de trop* you and the rest of them must have been. I should think they 'd have wanted to pitch you overboard." Mr. Greer took no notice of these remarks.

"When you go to visit them, I think you will have your eyes opened a little, my young friend. They will make the kind of king and queen you read about. Well, good-by."

THE END.

## THE BOOK AND THE PLAY.

A WAVE of healthful reaction has reached our stage — a mere ripple of a wave, perhaps, but one that we trust will not recede. One season ago, and the play whose chief stock-in-trade was a certain catering to the unclean was disagreeably preponderant. This year that play is the exception. None is quicker than the theatrical manager to act upon—if possible to anticipate—a change in the public taste. As a result, we have presented to us this season a succession of healthy, old-fashioned romances, where love and adventure hold the boards, and the jaundiced “problem” finds no place.

The same public sentiment which called for a cleaner stage has made possible the wide popularity and remarkable sales of some of our recent American novels—tales of love and adventure, with their fair heroines and invincible heroes and villains inevitably foiled. Though

the machinations of the villain are incredible if you will, the heroes too noble and the maidens too fair, yet the love is pure, the adventures give you pleasant thrills, and the after-taste in your mouth is a sweet one.

When the whims of the novel-reading and the theatre-going public happen to coincide, then dramatization waxes fast and furious.

Ever since its publication, the dramatists had an eye upon *Her Majesty*, and the dramatic rights were finally secured by J. I. C. Clarke, editor, until recently, of *The Criterion*. Mr. Clarke is an experienced and clever dramatist, and the material placed in his hands was excellently adapted to the making of a popular play of the new order. The result is all that it should be, and the play, admirably staged, is now being presented under the management of Mr. William A. Brady. There is plenty of excitement ; some bloodshed (behind the scenes); a popular revolution; a lover ardent enough to satisfy the most fastidious; and, above all, a heroine who, to add to her delightful knack at getting safely out of a very tight place, is well worth loving. One more factor — a most essential one — was needed to insure

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B. J.



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